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**THE**  
**Basis of Morality**

**By**  
**Annie Besant**



## THE BASIS OF MORALITY

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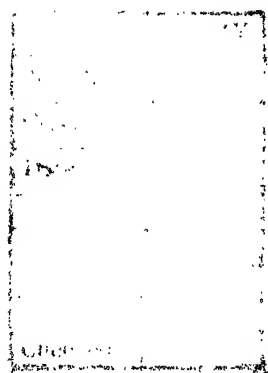
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# THE BASIS OF MORALITY

BY  
ANNIE BESANT

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*Mysticism, The Immediate Future,  
Initiation : The Perfecting of Man,  
Superhuman Men, etc. etc.*

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# I

## REVELATION

MUST religion and morals go together? Can one be taught without the other? It is a practical question for educationists, and France tried to answer it in the dreariest little cut and dry kind of catechism ever given to boys to make them long to be wicked. But apart from education, the question of the bedrock on which morals rest, the foundation on which a moral edifice can be built that will stand secure against the storms of life—that is a question of perennial interest, and it must be answered by each of us, if we would have a test of Right and Wrong, would know why Right is Right, why Wrong is Wrong.

Religions based on Revelation find in Revelation their basis for morality, and for them that is Right which the Giver of the Revelation commands, and that is Wrong which He forbids. Right is Right because God, or a Rshi or a Prophet, commands it, and Right rests on the Will of a Lawgiver, authoritatively revealed in a Scripture.

Now all Revelation has two great disadvantages as a basis for morality. It is fixed, and therefore unprogressive; while man evolves, and at a later stage of his growth, the morality taught in the Revelation becomes archaic and unsuitable. A written book cannot change, and many things in the Bibles of Religion come to be out of date, inappropriate to new circumstances, and even shocking to an age in which conscience has become more enlightened than it was of old.

The fact that in the same Revelation as that in which palpably immoral commands appear, there occur also jewels of fairest radiance, gems of poetry, pearls of truth, helps us not at all. If moral teachings worthy only of savages occur in Scriptures containing also rare and precious precepts of purest sweetness, the juxtaposition of light and darkness only produces moral chaos. We cannot here appeal to reason or judgment for both must be silent before authority; both rest on the same ground. "Thus saith the Lord" precludes all argument.

Let us take two widely accepted Scriptures, both regarded as authoritative by the respective religions which accept them as coming from a Divine Preceptor or through a human but illuminated being, Moses in the one case, Mann in the other. I am, of course, well aware that in both cases we have to do with books which may contain traditions of their great authors, even sentences transmitted down the centuries.

## REVELATION

The unravelling of the tangled threads woven into such books is a work needing the highest scholarship and an infinite patience ; few of us are equipped for such labour. But let us ignore the work of the Higher Criticism, and take the books as they stand, and the objection raised to them as a basis for morality will at once appear.

Thus we read in the same book : "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." "The stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." "Sanctify yourselves therefore and be ye holy." Scores of noble passages, inculcating high morality, might be quoted. But we have also : "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly saying, let us go and serve other Gods. . . thou shalt not consent unto him nor hearken unto him ; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him, but thou shalt surely kill him ; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death." "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." A man is told, that he may seize a fair woman in war, and "be her husband and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be that if thou hast no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will." These teachings and

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many others like them have drenched Europe with blood and scorched it with fire. Men have grown out of them; they no longer heed nor obey them, for man's reason performs its eclectic work on Revelation, chooses the good, rejects the evil. This is very good, but it destroys Revelation as a basis. Christians have outgrown the lower part of their Revelation, and do not realise that in striving to explain it away they put the axe to the root of its authority.

So also is it with the Institutes of Manu, to take but one example from the great sacred literature of India. There are precepts of the noblest order, and the essence and relative nature of morality is philosophically set out; "the sacred law is thus grounded on the rule of conduct," and He declares that good conduct is the root of further growth in spirituality. Apart from questions of general morality, to which we shall need to refer hereafter, let us take the varying views of women as laid down in the present Smṛti as accepted. On many points there is no wiser guide than parts of this Smṛti, as will be seen in Chapter IV. With regard to the marriage law, Manu says: "Let mutual fidelity continue unto death." Of a father He declares: "No father who knows must take even the smallest gratuity for his daughter; for a man, who through avarice takes a gratuity, is a seller of his offspring." Of the home, He says: "Women must be honoured and adorned by their fathers, husbands, brothers and brothers-in-

law who desire happiness. Where women are honoured, there the Devas are pleased; but where they are not honoured, any sacred rite is fruitless." "In that family where the husband is pleased with his wife and the wife with her husband [note the equality], happiness will assuredly be lasting." Food is to be given first in a house to "newly-married women, to infants, to the sick, and to pregnant women". Yet the same Mann is supposed to have taken the lowest and coarsest view of women: "It is the nature of women to seduce men; for that reason the wise are never unguarded with females . . . One should not sit in a lonely place with one's mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are powerful, and master even a learned man." A woman must never act "independently, even in her own house," she must be subject to father, husband or (on her husband's death) sons. Women have allotted to them as qualities, "impure desires, wrath, dishonesty, malice and bad conduct". The Shūdra servant is to be "regarded as a younger son"; a slave is to be looked on "as one's shadow," and if a man is offended by him he "must bear it without resentment"; yet the most abhorrently punishments are ordered to be inflicted on Shūdras for intruding on certain sacred rites.

The net result is that ancient Revelations, being given for a certain age and certain social conditions, often cannot and ought not to be carried out in the present state of Society; that ancient documents are

difficult to verify—often impossible—as coming from those whose names they bear; that there is no guarantee against forgeries, interpolations, glosses, becoming part of the text, with a score of other imperfections; that they contain contradictions, and often absurdities, to say nothing of immoralities. Ultimately every Revelation must be brought to the bar of reason, and as a matter of fact, is so brought in practice, even the most “orthodox” Brāhmaṇa in Hindūism, disregarding all the Shāstraic injunctions which he finds to be impracticable or even inconvenient, while he uses those which suit him to condemn his “unorthodox” neighbours.

No Revelation is accepted as fully binding in any ancient religion, but by common consent the inconvenient parts are quietly dropped, and the evil parts repudiated. Revelation as a basis for morality is impossible. But all sacred books contain much that is pure, lofty, inspiring, belonging to the highest morality, the true utterances of the Sages and Saints of mankind. These precepts will be regarded with reverence by the wise, and should be used as authoritative teaching for the young and the uninstructed as moral textbooks—like textbooks in other sciences—and as containing moral truths, some of which can be verified by all morally advanced persons, and others verifiable only by those who reach the level of the original teachers.

## II

### INTUITION

WHEN scholarship, reason and conscience have made impossible the acceptance of Revelation as the bedrock of morality, the student—especially in the West—is apt next to test “Intuition” as a probable basis for ethics. In the East, this idea has not appealed to the thinker in the sense in which the word Intuition is used in the West. The moralist in the East has based ethics on Revelation, or on Evolution, or on Illumination—the last being the basis of the Mystic. Intuition—which by moralists like Theodore Parker, Frances Power Cobb, and many Theists, is spoken of as the “Voice of God” in the human soul—is identified by these with “conscience,” so that to base morality on Intuition is equivalent to basing it on conscience, and making the dictate of conscience the categorical imperative, the inner voice which declares authoritatively “Thou shalt,” or “Thou shalt not”.

Now it is true that for each individual there is no better, no safer, guide than his own conscience and



that when the moralist says to the inquirer : "Obey your conscience," he is giving him sound ethical advice. None the less is the thinker faced with an apparently insuperable difficulty in the way of accepting conscience as an ethical basis ; for he finds the voice of conscience varying with civilisation, education, race, religion, traditions, customs, and if it be, indeed, the voice of God in man, he cannot but see—in a sense quite different from that intended by the writer—that God "in divers manners spoke in past times". Moreover he observes, as an historical fact, that some of the worst crimes which have disgraced humanity have been done in obedience to the voice of conscience. It is quite clear that Cromwell at Drogheda was obeying conscience, was doing that which he conscientiously believed to be the Will of God ; and there is no reason to doubt that a man like Torquemada was also carrying out what he conscientiously believed to be the Divine Will in the war which he waged against heresy through the Inquisition.

In this moral chaos, with such a clash of discordant "Divine Voices," where shall sure guidance be found ? One recalls the bitter gibe of Laud to the Puritan, who urged that he must follow his conscience : "Yea, verily ; but take heed that thy conscience be not the conscience of a fool."

Conscience speaks with authority, whenever it speaks at all. Its voice is imperial, strong and clear. None the less is it often uninformed, mistaken, in its

dictate. There is an Intuition which is verily the voice of the Spirit in man, in the God-illuminated man, which is dealt with in the fifth chapter. But the Intuition recognised in the West, and identified with conscience, is something far other.

For the sake of clarity, we must define what conscience is since we have said what it is not : that it is not the voice of the Spirit in man, that it is not the voice of God.

Conscience is the result of the accumulated experience gained by each man in his previous lives. Each of us is an Immortal Spirit, a Divine fragment, a Self : "A fragment of mine own Self, transformed in the world of life into an immortal Spirit, draweth round itself the senses, of which the mind is the sixth, veiled in Matter." Such is each man. He evolves into manifested powers all the potentialities unfolded in him by virtue of his divine parentage, and this is effected by repeated births into this world, wherein he gathers experience, repeated deaths out of this world into the other twain—the wheel of births and deaths turns in the Triloka, the three worlds—wherein he reaps in pain the results of experiences gathered by disregard of law, and assimilates, transforming into faculty, moral and mental, the results of experience gathered in harmony with law. Having transmuted experience into faculty, he returns to earth for the gathering of new experience, dealt with as before after physical death. Thus the Spirit unfolds, or the

man evolves—whichever expression is preferred to indicate this growth. Very similarly doth the physical body grow; a man eats food; digests it, assimilates it, transmutes it into the materials of his body; ill food causes pain, even disease; good food strengthens, and makes for growth. The outer is a reflection of the inner.

Now conscience is the sum total of the experiences in past lives which have borne sweet and bitter fruit, according as they were in accord or disaccord with surrounding natural law. This sum total of *physical* experiences, which result in increased or diminished life, we call instinct, and it is life-preserving. The sum total of our interwoven *mental and moral* experiences, in our relations with others, is moral instinct, or conscience, and it is harmonising, impels to “good”—a word which we shall define in our fourth chapter.

Hence conscience depends on the experiences through which we have passed in previous lives, and is necessarily an individual possession. It differs where the past experience is different, as in the savage and the civilised man, the dolt and the talented, the fool and the genius, the criminal and the saint. The voice of God would speak alike in all; the experience of the past speaks differently in each. Hence also the consciences of men at a similar evolutionary level speak alike on broad questions of right and wrong, good and evil. On these the “voice” is clear. But

there are many questions whereon past experience fails us, and then conscience fails to speak. We are in doubt ; two apparent duties conflict ; two ways seem equally right or equally wrong. "I do not know what I *ought* to do," says the perplexed moralist, hearing no inner voice. In such cases, we must seek to form the best judgment we can, and then act boldly. If unknowingly we disregard some hidden law we shall suffer, and *that* experience will be added to our sum total, and in similar circumstances in the future, conscience, through the aid of this added experience, will have found a voice.

Hence we may ever, having judged as best we can, act boldly, and learn increased wisdom from the result.

Much moral cowardice, paralysing action, has resulted from the Christian idea of "sin," as something that incurs the "wrath of God," and that needs to be "forgiven," in order to escape an artificial—not a natural—penalty. We gain knowledge by experience, and disregard of a law, where it is not known, should cause us no distress, no remorse, no "repentance," only a quiet mental note that we must in future remember the law which we disregarded and make our conduct harmonise therewith. Where conscience does not speak, how shall we act ? The way is well known to all thoughtful people : we first try to eliminate all personal desire from the consideration of the subject on which decision is needed, so that the mental atmosphere may not be rendered a distorting

medium by the mists of personal pleasure or pain ; next, we place before us all the circumstances, giving each its due weight ; then, we decide ; the next step depends on whether we believe in Higher Powers or not ; if we do, we sit down quietly and alone ; we place our decision before us ; we suspend *all* thought, but remain mentally alert—all mental ear, as it were ; we ask for help from God, from our Teacher, from our own *Higher Self* ; into *that* silence comes the decision. We obey it, without further consideration, and then we watch the result, and judge by that of the value of the decision, for it may have come from the higher or from the lower Self. But, as we did our very best, we feel no trouble, even if the decision should be wrong and bring us pain. We have gained an experience, and will do better next time. The trouble, the pain, we have brought on ourselves by our ignorance, we note, as showing that we have disregarded a law, and we profit by the additional knowledge in the future.

Thus understanding conscience, we shall not take it as a basis of morality, but as our best available individual light. We shall judge our conscience, educate it, evolve it by mental effort, by careful observation. As we learn more, our conscience will develop ; as we act up to the highest we can see, our vision will become ever clearer, and our ear more sensitive. As muscles develop by exercise, so conscience develops by activity, and as we use our lamp it burns the more

brightly. But let it ever be remembered that it is a man's own experience that must guide him, and his own conscience that must decide. To overrule the conscience of another is to induce in him moral paralysis, and to seek to dominate the will of another is a crime.

### III

#### UTILITY

To those whose intelligence and conscience had revolted against the crude and immoral maxims mixed up with noble precepts in Revelation ; to those who recognised the impossibility of accepting the varying voices of Intuition as a moral guide ; to all those the theory that Morality was based on Utility, came as a welcome and rational relief. It promised a scientific certitude to moral precepts ; it left the intellect free to inquire and to challenge ; it threw man back on grounds which were found in this world alone, and could be tested by reason and experience ; it derived no authority from antiquity, no sanction from religion ; it stood entirely on its own feet, independently of the many conflicting elements which were found in the religions of the past and present.

The basis for morality, according to Utility, is the greatest happiness of the greatest number ; that which conduces to the greatest happiness of the greatest number is Right ; that which does not is Wrong.

*This general maxim being laid down, it remains for the student to study history, to analyse experience, and by a close and careful investigation into human nature and human relations to elaborate a moral code which would bring about general happiness and well-being. This, so far, has not been done. Utility has been a "hand-to-mouth" moral basis, and certain rough rules of conduct have grown up by experience and the necessities of life, without any definite investigation into, or codifying of, experience. Man's moral basis as a rule is a compound of partially accepted revelations and partially admitted consciences, with a practical application of the principle of "that which works best". The majority are not philosophers, and care little for a logical basis. They are unconscious empirics, and their morality is empirical.*

Mr. Charles Bradaugh, considering that the maxim did not sufficiently guard the interests of the minority, and that, so far as was possible, these also should be considered and guarded, added another phrase; his basis ran: "The greatest happiness of the greatest number, with the least injury to any." The rule was certainly improved by the addition, but it did not remove many of the objections raised.

It was urged by the Utilitarian that morality had developed out of the social side of human beings; that men, as social animals, desired to live in permanent relations with each other, and that this resulted



in the formation of families ; men could not be happy in solitude ; the persistence of these groups, amid the conflicting interests of the individuals who composed them, could only be secured by recognising that the interests of the majority must prevail, and form the rule of conduct for the whole family. Morality, it was pointed out, thus began in family relations, and conduct which disrupted the family was wrong, while that which strengthened and consolidated it was right. Thus family morality was established. As families congregated together for mutual protection and support, their separate interests as families were found to be conflicting, and so a *modus vivendi* was sought in the same principle which governed relations within the family : the common interests of the grouped families, the tribe, must prevail over the separate and conflicting interests of the separate families ; that which disrupted the tribe was wrong, while that which strengthened and consolidated it was right. Thus tribal morality was established. The next step was taken as tribes grouped themselves together and became a nation, and morality extended so as to include all who were within the nation ; that which disrupted the nation was wrong, and that which consolidated and strengthened it was right. Thus national morality was established. Further than that, utilitarian morality has not progressed, and international relations have not yet been moralised ; they remain in the savage

state, and recognise no moral law. Germany has boldly accepted this position, and declares formally that, for the State, Might is Right, and that all which the State can do for its own aggrandisement, for the increase of its power, it may and ought to do, for there is no rule of conduct to which it owes obedience; it is a law unto itself. Other nations have not formalised the statement in their literature as Germany has done, but the strong nations have acted upon it in their dealings with the weaker nations, although the dawning sense of an international morality in the better of them has led to the defence of international wrong by "the tyrant's plea, necessity". The most flagrant instance of the utter disregard of right and wrong as between nations, is, perhaps, the action of the allied European nations against China—in which the Hun theory of "frightfulness" was enunciated by the German Kaiser—but the history of nations so far is a history of continual trappings on the weak by the strong, and with the coming to the front of the Christian white nations, and their growth in scientific knowledge and thereby in power, the coloured nations and tribes, whether civilised or savage, have been continually exploited and oppressed. International morality, at present, does not exist. Murder within the family, the tribe, and the nation is marked as a crime, save that judicial murder, capital punishment, is permitted—on the principle of (supposed) Utility. But multiple murder outside the nation—War—is not

regarded as criminal, nor is theft "wrong," when committed by a strong nation on a weak one. It may be that out of the widespread misery caused by the present War, some international morality may be developed.

We may admit that, as a matter of historical and present fact, Utility has been everywhere tacitly accepted as the basis of morality, defective as it is as a theory. Utility is used as the test of Revelation, as the test of Intuition, and precepts of Manu, Zarathushtra, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, are acted on, or disregarded, according as they are considered to be useful, or harmful, or impracticable, to be suitable or unsuitable to the times. Inconsistencies in these matters do not trouble the "practical" ordinary man.

The chief attack on the theory of Utility as a basis for morality has come from Christians, and has been effected by challenging the word "happiness" as the equivalent of "pleasure," the "greatest number" as equivalent to "individual," and then denouncing the maxim as "a morality for swine". "Virtue" is placed in antagonism to happiness, and virtue, not happiness, is said to be the right aim for man. This really begs the question, for what is "virtue"? The crux of the whole matter lies there. Is "virtue" opposed to "happiness," or is it a means to happiness? Why is the word "pleasure" substituted for "happiness" when utility is attacked? We may take the second question first.

"Pleasure," in ordinary parlance, means an immediate and transitory form of happiness and usually a happiness of the body rather than of the emotions and the mind. Hence the "swine". A sensual enjoyment is a "pleasure"; union with God would not be called a pleasure, but happiness. An old definition of man's true object is: "To know God, and to enjoy Him for ever." There happiness is clearly made the true end of man. The assailant changes the "greatest happiness of the greatest number" into the "pleasure of the individual," and having created this man of straw, he triumphantly knocks it down.

Does not virtue lead to happiness? Is it not a condition of happiness? How does the Christian define virtue? It is obedience to the Will of God. But he only obeys that Will as "revealed" so far as it agrees with Utility. He no longer slays the heretic, and he suffers the witch to live. He does not give his cloak to the thief who has stolen his coat, but he hands over the thief to the policeman. Moreover, as Herbert Spencer pointed out, he follows virtue as leading to heaven; if right conduct led him to everlasting torture, would he still pursue it? Or would he revise his idea of right conduct? The martyr dies for the truth he sees, because it is easier *to him* to die than to betray truth. He could not live on happily as a conscious liar. The nobility of a man's character is tested by the things which give

him pleasure. The joy in following truth, in striving after the noblest he can see—that is the greatest happiness; to sacrifice present enjoyment for the service of others is not self-denial, but self-expression, to the Spirit who is man.

Where Utility fails is that it does not inspire, save where the spiritual life is already seen to be the highest happiness of the individual, because it conduces to the good of all, not only of the “greatest number”. Men who thus feel have inspiration from within themselves and need no outside moral code, no compelling external law. Ordinary men, the huge majority at the present stage of evolution, need either compulsion or inspiration, otherwise they will not control their animal nature, they will not sacrifice an immediate pleasure to a permanent increase of happiness, they will not sacrifice personal gain to the common good. The least developed of these are almost entirely influenced by fear of personal pain and wish for personal pleasure; they will not put their hand into the fire, because they know that fire burns, and no one accuses them of a “low motive” because they do not burn themselves; religion shows them that the results of the disregard of moral and merital law work out in suffering after death as well as before it, and that the results of obedience to such laws similarly work out in post-mortem pleasure. It thus supplies a useful element in the early stages of moral development.

At a higher stage, love of God and the wish to "please Him" by leading an exemplary life is a motive offered by religion, and this inspires to purity and to self-sacrifice ; again, this is no more ignoble than the wish to please the father, the mother, the friend. Many a lad keeps pure to please his mother, because he loves her. So religious men try to live nobly to please God, because they love Him. At a higher stage yet, the good of the people, the good of the race, of humanity in the future, acts as a potent inspiration. But this does not touch the selfish lower types. Hence Utility fails as a compelling power with the majority, and is insufficient as motive. Add to this the radical fault that it does not place morality on a universal basis, the happiness of *all*, that it disregards the happiness of the minority, and its unsatisfactory nature is seen. It has much of truth in it ; it enters as a determining factor into all systems of ethics, even where nominally ignored or directly rejected ; it is a better basis in theory, though a worse one in practice, than either Revelation or Intuition, but it is incomplete. We must seek further for a solid basis of morality.

## IV

### EVOLUTION

WE come now to the sure basis of morality, the bed-rock of Nature, whereon Morality may be built beyond all shaking and change, built as a Science with recognised laws, and in a form intelligible and capable of indefinite expansion. Evolution is recognised as the method of Nature, her method in all her realms, and according to the ascertained laws of Nature, so far as they are known, all wise and thoughtful people endeavour to guide themselves. In making Morality a Science, we give it a binding force, and render it of universal application ; moreover, we incorporate into it all the fragments of truth which exist in other systems, and which have lent to them their authority, their appeal to the intellect and the heart.

Let us first define Morality. It is the science of human relations, the Science of Conduct, and its laws, as inviolable, as sure, as changeless, as all other laws of Nature, can be discovered and formulated.

Harmony with these laws, like harmony with all other natural laws, is the condition of happiness, for in a realm of law none can move without pain while disregarding law. A law of Nature is the statement of an inviolable and constant sequence external to ourselves and unchangeable by our will, and amid the conditions of these inviolable sequences we live, from these we cannot escape. One choice alone is ours : to live in harmony with them or to disregard them ; violate them we cannot, but we can dash ourselves against them ; then the law asserts itself in the suffering that results from our flinging ourselves against it, or from our disregarding its existence ; its existence is proved as well by the pain that results from our disregard of it, as by the pleasure that results from our harmony with it. Only a fool deliberately and gratuitously disregards a natural law when he knows of its existence ; a man shapes his conduct so as to avoid the pain which results from clashing with it, unless he deliberately disregards the pain in view of a result to be brought about, which he considers to be worth more than the purchase price of pain. The Science of Morality, of Right Conduct, " lays down the conditions of harmonious relations between individuals, and their several environments small or large, families, societies, nations, humanity as a whole. Only by the knowledge and observance of these laws can men be either permanently healthy or permanently happy, can they live in peace and prosperity. Where morality is



unknown or disregarded, friction inevitably arises, disharmony and pain result; for Nature is a settled Order in the mental and moral worlds as much as in the physical, and only by knowledge of that Order and by obedience to it can harmony, health and happiness be secured."

The religious man sees in the laws of Nature the manifestation of the Divine Nature, and in obedience to and co-operation with them, he sees obedience to and co-operation with the Will of God. The non-religious man sees them as sequences he cannot alter, on harmony with which his happiness, his comfort, depends. In either case they have a binding force, The man belonging to any exoteric religion will modify by them the precepts of his Scriptures, realising that morality rises as Evolution proceeds. He does thus modify scriptural precepts by practical obedience or disregard, whether he do it by theory or not. But it is better that theory and practice should correspond. The intuitionist will understand that conscience, accumulated experience, has developed by experience within these laws. The utilitarian will see that the happiness of 'all, not only of the greatest number, must be ensured by a true morality, and will understand why Happiness is the result thereof. Manu indicates the various bases very significantly: "The whole Veda is the source of the Sacred Law [Revelation], next the tradition [Conscience] and the virtuous conduct of

those who know [Utility], also the customs of holy men [Evolution] and self-satisfaction [Mysticism]" (ii, 6.). It is true that happiness can result only by harmony with law, harmony with the Divine Will which is embodied in law—we need not quarrel over names—and the Science of Right Conduct, "by establishing righteousness brings about Happiness". It may therefore be truly said that the object of Morality is Universal Happiness. Why the doing of a right action causes a flow of happiness in the doer, even in the midst of a keen temporary pain entailed by it, we shall see under "Mysticism".

The moment we base Morality on Evolution, we see that it must change with the stage of evolution reached, and that the duty—that which ought to be done—of the civilised and highly advanced man is not the same as the duty of the savage. "One set of duties for men in the Kṛta age, different ones in the Tretā and in the Dvāpara, and another in the Kali." (*Manusmṛti*, i, 85.) Different ages bring new duties. But if Morality be based on Evolution we can at once define what is "Right" and what is "Wrong". That is Right which subserves Evolution; that is Wrong which antagonises it. Or in other words, for those of us who believe that God's method for this world is the evolutionary: that is Right which co-operates with His Will; that is wrong which works against it. "Revelation" is an attempt to state this at any given time; "Intuition" is the result of successful attempts

to do this ; " Utility " is the application of observed results of happiness and misery which flow from obedience to this, or disregard thereof.

Evolution is the unfolding and manifestation of life-energies, the unfolding of the capacities of consciousness, the manifestation of these ever-increasing capacities in ever-improving and more plastic forms. The primary truth of Morality, as of Religion and of Science, is the Unity of Life. One Life ever unfolding in endless varieties of forms ; the essence of all beings is the same, the inequalities are the marks of the stage of its unfoldment.

When we base Morality on Evolution, we cannot have, it is obvious, one cut and dry rule for all. Those who want cut and dry rules must go to their Scriptures for them, and even then, as the rules in the Scriptures are contradictory—both as between Scriptures and within any given Scripture—they must call in the help of Intuition and Utility in the making of their code, in their selective process. This selective process will be largely moulded by the public opinion of their country and age, emphasising some precepts and ignoring others, and the code will be the expression of the average morality of the time. If this clumsy and uncertain fashion of finding a rule of conduct does not suit us, we must be willing to exert our intelligence, to take a large view of the evolutionary process, and to deduce our moral precepts at any given stage by applying our reason to the scrutiny

of this process at that stage. This scrutiny is a laborious one; but Truth is the prize of effort in the search therefor, it is not an unearned gift to the slothful and the careless.

This large view of the evolutionary process shows us that it is best studied in two great divisions: the first from the savage to the highly civilised man who is still working primarily for himself and his family, still working for private ends predominantly; and the second, at present but sparsely followed, in which the man, realising the supreme claim of the whole upon its part, seeks the public good predominantly, renounces individual advantages and private gains, and consecrates himself to the service of God and of man. The Hindū calls the first section of evolution the *Pravṛtṭi Mārga*, the Path of Forthgoing; the second the *Nivṛtṭi Mārga*, the Path of Return. In the first, the man evolves by taking; in the second, by giving. In the first, he incurs debts; in the second, he pays them. In the first, he acquires; in the second, he renounces. In the first, he lives for the profit of the smaller self; in the second, for the service of the One Self. In the first, he claims Rights; in the second, he discharges Duties.

Thus Morality is seen from two view-points, and the virtues it comprises fall into two groups. Men are surrounded on every side by objects of desire, and the use of these is to evoke the desire to possess them, to stimulate exertion, to inspire efforts, and thus to

make faculty, capacity—strength, intelligence, alertness, judgment, perseverance, patience, fortitude. Those who regard the world as God-emanated and God-guided, must inevitably realise that the relation of man—susceptible to pleasure and pain by contact with his environment—to his environment—filled with pleasure and pain-giving objects—must be intended to provoke in man the desire to possess the pleasure-giving, to avoid the pain-giving. In fact, God's lures to exertion are pleasures; His warnings are pains and the interplay between man and environment causes evolution. The man who does not believe in God has only to substitute the word "Nature" for "God" and to leave out the idea of design, and the argument remains the same: man's relation to his environment provokes exertion, and thus evolution. A man on the Path of Forthgoing will, at first, seize everything he desires, careless of others, and will gradually learn, from the attacks of the despoiled, some respect for the rights of others; the lesson will be learnt more quickly by the teaching of more advanced men—R̥shis, Founders of Religions, Sages, and the like—who tell him that if he kills, robs, tramples on others, he will suffer. He does all these things; he suffers; he learns—his post-mortem lives helping him much in the learning. Later on, he lives a more controlled and regulated life, and he may blamelessly enjoy the objects of desire, provided he injure none in the taking. Hīndūism

lays down, as the proper pursuits for the household life, the gaining of wealth, the performance of the duties of the position held, the gratification of desire. The desires will become subtler and more refined as intelligence fashions them and as emotions replace passions; but throughout the treading of the Path of Forthgoing, the "desire for fruit" is the necessary and blameless motive for exertion. Without this, the man at this stage of evolution becomes lethargic and does not evolve. Desire subserves Evolution, and it is Right. The gratification of Desire may lead a man to do injury to others, and as soon as he has developed enough to understand this, then the gratification becomes wrong, because, forgetting the Unity, he has inflicted harm on one who shares life with him, and has thus hampered evolution. The sense of Unity is the root-Love, the Uniter, and Love is the expression of the attraction of the separated towards union; out of Love, controlled by reason and by the desire for the happiness of all, grow all Virtues, which are but permanent, universal, specialised *forms* of love. So also is the sense of Separateness the root-Hate, the Divider, the expression of the repulsion of the separated from each other. Out of this grow all Vices, the permanent, universal, specialised *forms* of Hate. That which Love does for the Beloved, that Virtue does for all who need its aid, so far as its power extends. That which Hate wreaks on the Abhorred, that Vice does

to all who obstruct its path, so far as its power extends. 2554

“Virtues and Vices are fixed emotional states. The Virtues are fixed Love-emotions, regulated and controlled by enlightened intelligence seeing the Unity; the Vices are fixed Hate-emotions, strengthened and intensified by the unenlightened intelligence, seeing the separateness.” (*Universal Text Book*, ii, 32.) It is obvious that virtues are constructive and vices destructive, for Love holds together, while Hate disintegrates. Yet the modified form of Hate—antagonism, competition—had its part to play in the earlier stages of human evolution, developing strength, courage, and endurance, and while Love built up Nations within themselves, Hate made each strong against its competitor. And within Nations, there has been conflict of classes, class and caste war, and all this modified and softened by a growing sense of a common good, until Competition, the characteristic of the Path of Forthgoing tends to change into Co-operation, the characteristic of the Path of Return. The Path of Forthgoing must still be trodden by many, but the number is decreasing; more and more are turning towards the Path of Return. Ideals are formulated by the leaders of Humanity, and the Ideals held up to-day are increasingly those of Love and of Service. “During the first stage, man grasps at everything he desires and develops a strong individuality by conflict; in the

second, he shares all he has, and yokes that individuality to service; ever-increasing separation is the key-note of the one; ever-increasing unity is the key-note of the other. Hence we need not brand as evil the rough aggression and the fierce struggles of barbarous times; they were a necessary stage of growth and were at that stage Right, and in the divine plan. But now those days are over, strength has been won; the time has come when the separated selves must gradually draw together, and to co-operate with the divine Will which is working for union is the Right. The Right which is the outcome of Love, directed by reason, at the present stage of evolution, then, seeks an ever-increasing realisation of Unity, a drawing together of the separated selves. That which by establishing harmonious relations makes for Unity is Right; that which divides and disintegrates, which makes for separation, is Wrong." (*ibid.*, 10, 11.)

Hindūism, on which the whole of this is based, has added to this broad criterion the division of a life into four stages, to each of which appropriate virtues are assigned: the Student Period, with its virtues of perfect continence, industry, frugality, exertion; the Household Period, with its virtue of duties appropriate to the position, the earning and enjoying of wealth, the gratification of desires; the Retirement Period, with the virtues of the renouncing of worldly gain and of sacrifice; the Ascetic Period, of complete renunciation, meditation and preparation for post-mortem life.



These indications make more easy the decisions as to Right and Wrong.

The more we think upon and work out into detail this view of Morality as based on Evolution, the more we realise its soundness, and the more we find that the moral law is as discoverable by observation, by reason, and by experiment, as any other law of Nature. If a man disregards it, either ignorantly or wilfully, he suffers. A man may disregard physical hygienic and sanitary laws because of his ignorance; none the less will he suffer from physical disease. A man may disregard moral laws because of ignorance; none the less will he suffer from moral disease. The sign of disease in both cases is pain and unhappiness; experts in both cases warn us, and if we disregard the warning, we learn its truth later by experience. There is no hurry; but the law is sure. Working with the law, man evolves swiftly with happiness; working against it, he evolves slowly with pain. In either case, he evolves, advancing joyously as a free man, or scourged onwards as a slave. The most obstinate fool in life's class, refusing to learn, fortunately dies and cannot quite escape after death the knowledge of his folly.

Let the reader try for himself the solution of moral problems, accepting, as a hypothesis, the facts of evolution and of the two halves of its huge spiral, and see for himself if this view does not offer a rational, intelligible, practical meaning to the much-vexed

words, Right and Wrong. Let him see how it embraces all that is true in the other bases suggested, is their summation, and rationalises their precepts. He will find that Morality is no longer dependent on the maxims of great Teachers—though indeed they proclaimed its changeless laws—nor on the imperfect resultant of individual experiences, nor on the happiness of some only of the great human family, but that it inheres in the very nature of things, an essential law of happy life and ordered progress. Then indeed is Morality founded on a basis that cannot be moved; then indeed can it speak with an imperial authority the “ought” that must be obeyed; then it unfolds its beauty as humanity evolves to its perfecting, and leads to Bliss Eternal, the Brahman Bliss, where the human will, in fullest freedom, accords itself in harmony with the divine.

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## V

### MYSTICISM

MYSTICISM cannot be spoken of as a basis of morality in the sense in which Revelation, Intuition, Utility and Evolution are bases, for it is valid only for the individual, not for everybody; for the true Mystic, the dictates of the Outer or Inner God are imperial, compelling, but to any one else they are entirely unauthoritative. None the less, as the influence of the Mystic is wide-reaching, and his dicta are accepted by many as a trustworthy revelation—are not all revelations communicated by Mystics?—or as the intuition of an illuminated conscience, or as showing the highest utility, or as the result of an evolution higher than the normal, it is worth while to consider their value.

Mysticism is the realisation of God, of the Universal Self. It is attained either as a realisation of God outside the Mystic, or within himself. In the first case, it is usually reached from within a religion, by exceptionally intense love and devotion, accompanied

by purity of life, for only "the pure in heart shall see God". The external means are prayer to and meditation on the Object of devotion—Shrī Rāma, Shrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord Jesus—long continued and persevering, and the devotee realises his Divinity by ecstasy attaining Union thereby. Such Mystics are, for the most part, valuable to the world as creating an atmosphere of spirituality, which raises the general level of religious feeling in those who come within its area; India has especially profited by the considerable number of such Mystics found within its borders in past times, and to a lesser extent to-day; every one who practises, for instance, meditation, knows that it is easier here than elsewhere, and all sensitive persons feel the Indian "atmosphere". Outside this, such Mystics occasionally write valuable books, containing high ideals of the spiritual life. As a rule, they do not concern themselves with the affairs of the outer world, which they regard as unimportant. Their cry continually is that the world is evil, and they call on men to leave it, not to improve it. To them God and the world are in opposition, "the world, the flesh, and the devil" are the three great enemies of the spiritual life. In the West, this is almost universal, for in the Roman Catholic Church seclusion is the mark of the religious life, and "the religious" are the monk and the nun, the "religious" and the "secular" being in opposition. In truth, where the realisation of God outside himself is sought by the

devotee, seclusion is a necessity for success, if only for the time which is required for meditation, the essential preliminary of ecstasy. In the very rare Mystics of non-Catholic communions, full ecstasy is scarcely, if at all, known or even recognised; an overpowering sense of the divine Presence is experienced, but it is a Presence outside the worshipper; it is accompanied with a deliberate surrender of the will to God, and a feeling on the part of the man that he becomes an instrument of the divine Will; this he carries with him into outer life, and, undirected by love and the illuminated reason, it often lands the half-developed Mystic into fanaticism and cruelty; no one who has read Oliver Cromwell's letters can deny that he was a Mystic, half-developed, and it is on him that Lord Rosebery founded his dictum of the formidable nature of the "practical Mystic"; the ever present sense of a divine Power behind himself gives such a man a power that ordinary men cannot successfully oppose; but this sense affords no moral basis, as, witness the massacre of Drogheda. Such a Mystic, belonging to a particular religion, as he always does, takes the revelation of his religion as his moral code, and Cromwell felt himself as the avenging sword of his God, as did the Hebrews fighting with the Amalekites. No man who accepts a revelation as his guide can be regarded as more than partially a Mystic. He has the Mystic temperament only, and that undoubtedly gives him

a strength far beyond the strength of those who have it not.

The true Mystic, realising God, has no need of any Scriptures, for he has touched the source whence all Scriptures flow. An "enlightened" Brāhmaṇa, says Śrī Kṛṣṇa, has no more need of the Vedas, than a man needs a tank in a place which is overflowing with water. The value of cisterns, of reservoirs, is past; when a man is seated beside an ever-flowing spring. As Dean Inge has pointed out, Mysticism is the most scientific form of religion, for it bases itself, as does all science, on experience and experiment—experiment being only a specialised form of experience, devised either to discover or to verify.

We have seen the Mystic who realises God outside himself and seeks Union with Him. There remains the most interesting, the most effective form of Mysticism, the realisation by a man of God within himself. Here meditation is also a necessity, and the man who is born with a high capacity for concentration is merely a man who has practised it in previous lives. A life or lives of study and seclusion often precede a life of tremendous and sustained activity in the physical world. The realisation is preceded by control of the body, control of the emotions and control of the mind, for the power to hold these in complete stillness is necessary, if a man is to penetrate into those depths of his own nature in

which alone is to be found the shrine of the inner God. The subtle music of that sphere is drowned by the clatter of the lower bodies as the most exquisite notes of the Vīṇā are lost in the crude harsh sound of the harmonium. The Voice of the Silence can only be heard in the silence, and all the desires of the heart must be paralysed ere can arise in the tranquillity of senses and mind, the glorious majesty of the Self. Only in the desert of loneliness rises that Sun in all His glory, for all objects that might cloud His dawning must vanish; only "when half-Gods go," does God arise. Even the outer God must hide, ere the Inner God can manifest; the cry of agony of the Crucified must be wrung from the tortured lips; "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?" precedes the realisation of the God within.

Through this all Mystics pass who are needed for great service in the world, those whom Mr. Bagshot so acutely calls "materialised Mystics". The Mystics who find God outside themselves are the "unmaterialised" Mystics, and they serve the world in the ways above mentioned; but the other, as Mr. Bagshot points out, transmute their mystic thought into "practical energy," and these become the most formidable powers known in the physical world. All that is based on injustice, fraud and wrong may well tremble when one of these arises, for the Hidden God has become manifest, and who may bar His way?

Such Mystics wear none of the outer signs of the "religious"—their renunciation is within, not without, there is no parade of outer holiness, no outer separation from the world; Janaka the King, Kṛṣṇa the Warrior-Statesman, are of these; clothed in cotton cloth or cloth of gold, it matters not; poor or rich, it boots not; failing or succeeding, it is naught, for each apparent failure is the road to fuller success, and both are their servants, not their masters; victory ever attends them, to-day or a century hence is equal, for they live in Eternity, and with them it is ever To-day. Possessing nothing, all is theirs; holding everything, nothing belongs to them. Misconception, misrepresentation, they meet with a smile, half-amused, all-forgiving; the frowns, the taunts, the slanders of the men they live to serve are only the proofs of how much these foolish ones need their help, and how should these foolish ones hurt those on whom the Peace of the Eternal abides?

These Mystics are a law unto themselves, for the inner law has replaced the external compulsion. More rigid, for it is the law of their own nature; more compelling, for it is the Voice of the divine Will; more exacting, for no pity, no pardon, is known to it; more all-embracing, for it sees the part only in the whole.

But it has, it ought to have, no authority outside the Mystic himself. It may persuade, it may win, it may inspire, but it may not claim obedience as of right.



For the Voice of the God within only becomes authoritative for another when the God within that other self answers the Mystic's appeal, and he recognises an ideal that he could not have formulated, unaided, for himself. The Mystic may shine as a Light, but a man must see with his own eyes, and there lies the world's safety ; the materialised Mystic, strong as he is, cannot, by virtue of the God within him, enslave his fellow-men.

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MATERIALISM  
UNDERMINED BY  
SCIENCE.

A LECTURE

BY

ANNIE BESANT.

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# MATERIALISM UNDERMINED

BY SCIENCE.



It is now fourteen months, my Brothers, since last I stood amongst you when I came to Calcutta last January twelve-month. I had only then made the acquaintance of, as I may say, the India of the South, with the various aspects that there may be found in her laws and in her religious thoughts. Leaving your capital city I travelled northwards and westwards and visited several parts of India, those of the North and Northwest, and afterwards the Punjab. Thence I turned towards Bombay visiting several cities on the way, and then westwards back to Europe, there spending some months; and then southwards again to far Australia, where a new race is growing up, where a new nation as it were, is being born, and from that far off distant Isle, near to the South Pole. I come back once more to the Motherland amongst you again to bring you once more a message of the Eternal Verities of Spirituality, to speak amongst you once again the Eternal Truths which from ancient times have come down. For whether it be in India or Europe or Australia there

is one mighty Spiritual Truth to be proclaimed, the one thing needed for the soul of man and that is the knowledge of its wanderings after the Spirit, the knowledge of the Will of the Supreme. And whether in the lands of the West and South or whether under the fire of the tropical sun man is still demanding spiritual knowledge, is still struggling after spiritual life, still hoping for the same spiritual unity. To whatever land we may go, through whatever country we may pass, we have still Humanity as "the great orphan" crying for the Spirit, striving after Light, after spiritual unity, striving to find in the many exoteric religions the one Spiritual Truth which alone can satisfy the soul. And if I come back to you here and take up again the message which in this land has clothed itself in the ancient forms of Hindu religion from ancient times, it is not because India is the only land where human souls need it, it is not because India is the only country where the spirit of man is crying out for the Light, but it is because in this land there is more hope of a spiritual revival, and if a spiritual revival here there may be, then it will pour outwards to all the four corners of the world. For spirituality is more easily awakened in India than elsewhere. The spiritual heart here is only sleeping, whereas in some other land it has scarcely yet come to the birth; for you must remember that in this land is the birth place of every religion, and that from India, outwards, religions have made their way. Therefore it is that the soul of our mother India is so important for the future of the world, and therefore it is that the Materialism of India is so fatal. For it is here alone that lies the hope that man has of looking for spiritual life: for,

in truth, unless the life of the Spirit come in this land, by reviving here, then the hope is baseless that spirituality is to spread over the world. And I may say to you, ere glancing for a moment over the subjects with which I am to deal, upon this visit, that in travelling through the length and breadth of India, from South to North, from West to East, I have found this of the people : that in the South of India you have more pronounced and outward orthodoxy, you have the more defined observances of ancient ceremonies and ancient rites, that on the surface of the people, as it were, you see more of the outer signs of Hinduism and more exactitude in the discharge of the various religious duties. That is a characteristic of the Southern people; that is a marked attribute amongst their various communities. Far away in the Panjab, there you may find certain traits of manhood, of strength, of courage, which if they shall rise to the Spirit surely would give us great help, would give us an enormous reinforcement; for that race would move with force and energy, only perhaps slow to take action. In Bengal there is, as I have noticed, much outward sign of western influence, much of the surface of the people taking up western thought and western customs; but in the heart of Bengal there still remain, more than elsewhere, gleams of the ancient spirituality, so that, just as in spiritual matters India is the heart of the world, so is Bengal the heart of India and may save India as a whole for all Humanity. And therefore in speaking to you in the ten days which lie before me, I have chosen subject after subject which should all point to the one object,—and that is the revival of spirituality and the spread of the ancient Hindu re-



ligion in the hearts of its children, who are bound to it by ancestral ties. If you cannot revive spirituality in India through *Hinduism*, if you can not thus reach India, then there is nothing else you can hope to do; and I say that here alone is the one hope of reviving this ancient potentiality. Here is the one certain hope which will bind all the hearts of the Indians into one and therefore we must look to the revival of the ancient faith, —which however it has fallen, however much it has been corrupted in modern times, however much it may have lost spiritual life, is still the most ancient religion the world has ever known, sublime in its Philosophy and magnificent in its Literature. So that if this shall again become a living thing, India shall herself live; and with the revival all the sleeping truths of other religions shall look again towards their Indian mother, and make her once again the spiritual teacher of the world.

And now I am going to speak to you upon materialism; I am not going to deal now with a definite religious question, with definite religious teachings, with mighty doctrines in Philosophy, in Spiritual knowledge, which later on I shall hope to unfold before you. There is one thing that is eating the heart out of India, and that is modern materialism. There is one thing which is poisoning the mind of India, and that is the kind of science which is the teacher of materialism and works against Spirituality in the mind. How should I be able to tell you of the moral regeneration of India unless first I can strike at that which is piercing her heart and sucking out her very life-blood. So—as I have been trained in the science of the West, trained in the knowledge of the

physical Universe, which is so much used to make men believe that nothing but the physical remains—I take for my first subject, his undermining of materialism by science, and I attack it with the weapons that were once used to build it up.

Now it is fair to ask in the beginning why it is that religion and science should appear to be in opposition. Why is it that science should seem to play into the hands of materialism? Why is it that as science has advanced, Religion has found itself pressed backward and backward so that men begin to make excuses for spiritual truths and talk apologetically of religion? Why is it that men advocating spiritual truth are afraid of being called superstitious? Let us see whether there is no explanation why science at the outset should help materialism and the reason also why, as science has advanced, it begins to undermine the same materialism and to destroy that which it has helped to establish? You may remember Bacon, a great philosopher of the 17th Century, speaking on this very point used the following phrase:—that a little learning inclineth men to atheism, but deeper knowledge brings them back to religion. It is a true statement. Look for a moment at religion and science, and you will see why that should be the fact, and why one should be against the other. A man who is a spiritual man—a religious teacher—regards the universe from the stand point of the Spirit from which everything is seen as coming from the One. When he stands, as it were, in the centre, and he looks from the centre to the circumference, he stands at the point whence the force proceeds, and he judges of the force from that point of radiation and he sees it as one in its multitudinous workings,

and knows the force is One; he sees it in its many divergences, and he recognises it as one and the same thing throughout. Standing in the centre, in the Spirit, and looking outwards to the universe, he judges everything from the standpoint of the Divine Unity and sees every separate phenomenon, not as separate from the One but as the external expression of the one and the only Life. But science looks at the thing from the surface. It goes to the circumference of the universe and it sees a multiplicity of phenomena. It studies these separated things and studies them one by one. It takes up a manifestation and judges it; it judges it apart; it looks at the many, not at the One; it looks at the diversity, not at the Unity, and sees everything from outside and not from within; it sees the external difference and the superficial portion while it sees not the One from which every thing proceeds. You may imagine, to take a figure, that you stand where there is a white light—say an electric light sending out rays from a single point; imagine three tubes going out from this centre and rays of light travelling down each and passing through a glass of a different colour set in each tube; if you look from the point where the electric light is you would see the white light striking outward as a light which was one; but if you went to the far end of the tubes you would there see that the light was of three different colours, as red and blue and yellow, appearing as if the light was of three kinds not one, because in their separation unity would be entirely lost. See how that works in the Universe. You have your three great *gunas* or attributes through which, as it were, the light comes as through three different glasses, and the one Divine

Spirit comes down into manifestation; and it is not only the three *gunas* that you have but these intermingling one with another, and breaking in a thousand different channels. Then how great must be the differences at the circumference! But how it would lessen the difficulty if men could only see the processes, and know how those results were brought about; if they went further, and if travelling onward they found the divergences greatly diminish, see then how thus going forward, they may come as it were, near to the one, and reconciliation between Religion and Science may arise. Religion shows everything from the point of the Spirit and proclaims the unity. Scientists show everything from the point of view of diversity and proclaim that, as if in opposition, to the world. But Plato says of the man who can discern the one in the many, that that man he regards as a God; the work of the true spiritual teacher is to show the one under the multiplicity, to make man see the fact of unity underneath diversity, and as science goes forward she also may be used once more to help us, because in passing out of the physical into the super-physical and mental, she is going nearer to Unity.

And now let me turn to my science and give you the proofs of this. First let me refer you, though I need not dwell upon the point, to the remarkable position taken by Huxley in his latest writings, which were new when I was with you last year, but which remain unchanged, uncontradicted, as the latest proclamation of the great teacher of Agnosticism as the latest proclamation of its exponent in European Science. Two great points he made or rather three. First,—and I only mention these briefly, because

I dealt with them last year—first he pointed out that the evolution of virtue in man was directly in conflict with the evolution of the physical world: that when man evolved compassion, and tenderness and gentleness and self-sacrifice, when he learnt to use his strength for service instead of self-assertion,—he was flying right in the face of the laws by which progress had been made in the physical Universe. He was following the law of self-sacrifice as against the law of self-assertion. Why is it that man can thus set himself against the cosmos? It is because he is approaching the spiritual region; it is because he has begun to develop the essential nature of the divinity itself: for the life of God is in giving and not in taking; the life of God is in pouring out and not in grasping; and as man feels the life of the Spirit in him against the life of the animal, he grows Divinely strong. And when you find men of science admitting that the evolution of virtue is by the law of self-sacrifice, you may perhaps begin to admit the possibilities of what is said in some of the sacred scriptures, that Creation always begins with Sacrifice. You may remember that—I am quoting to you, leaving out only the first great word—"the dawn is the head of the sacrificial horse, of the horse which arose out of the water, the water which the commentary says represents *Paramâtmâ*." All creation is Sacrifice. The source or dawn is the sacrifice and everywhere the soul that would develop must live a life of sacrifice, because as the *Upanishad* says to you, a sacrifice of the Godhead was made in order that the world might exist. Sacrifice is the first condition in order that the Universe may be, and that man might be evolved to be one with Himself.

The second point made by Huxley, seems taken from the sacred books of India; man can set himself against the cosmos because in man there is an intelligence which is the same as the Intelligence which pervades the Universe. That is the lesson of the Shastras. The intelligence of man is one with the Intelligence which pervades the whole. Man can set himself against the external world, for "Thou art Brahman." and when that is realized by man all else becomes subject to his will. And the third belief that Huxley has thought fit to declare is that the working of consciousness in the higher cannot be understood by the lower. There is nothing against the analogy of nature in supposing that there are grades of intelligence rising above men. There may be other intelligences higher and higher and higher, reaching further and further far above the noblest intelligence of man. And there is nothing, he says, to make it impossible that there should be in the universe, above these grades—a Single Intelligence. But what is that? Nothing but what has been proclaimed in the Scriptures, Isvar, the Lord, the Logos, the Word of which all things were made. So that you may see how, on these lines, science in the mouth of one of its greatest teachers is undermining materialism.

Now let me go a little further. Let us see, not from the mouth of the teacher, but from the facts themselves, how changes are going on. Physical facts are being discovered which show that underneath the physical, mind must be at work. Underlying the physical, intelligence must be active; underlying a particle of what was once called dead matter, a metal, a crystal or a stone, there is a moving life,—there is a ruling intelligence. First let me say,—and the force of the argument may excuse the repetition of it,—that if you take a crystal, you find it grow along geometrical lines, with absolute definiteness of angles, as though a compass were used to trace it, and these lines make geometrical figures. So that Plato's

phrase "God geometrizes" is seen to be true even in the mineral kingdom. Then again when from the mineral you go to the vegetable where life is more active, where there seems to be less regularity, where there seems at first, less of order, you will find in reality that even in its multiplicity there is order, that in the vegetable as well there is the same immutable law. If you take the branch of a tree, you may study the way the leaves are set, and you will find every leaf in a definite place, both as regards the leaves lower down and higher up. So that the leaves of the tree are developed on a geometrical plan. More than that. Since I last stood here to speak to you, a series of investigations have been made into the way that metals behave under exercise. Every Engineer and other employer of machinery has noticed that when metal is used, where there are bars and wheels and other parts making up the machine, that with the use of the machine, what is called "fatigue" occurs. The metal gets tired. But what does this mean? It has been observed, that after a certain amount of exercise, the machine will not work well. It works like a tired horse or a tired man; it stumbles and can not carry on the work. What shall be done? Let it rest. It does not want improvement, as every part is perfect; it does not want repair,—there is nothing in it which is broken; it only needs to rest; and if it is allowed to rest it recovers from its fatigue, without a single thing being done to it, and it goes on to work as well as ever, showing that rest has given back its energies and that, just as a tired animal reposes, so also the "dead" metal may repose. This shews that even in a metal there is life—for a dead thing can not get tired a dead thing can not lose its energies, a dead thing cannot be restored by rest. These are all signs of a living body; where there is fatigue and recovery of energies by rest, there is life existing, however hidden it may be under the form which conceals it from our eyes.

And now for a moment turn to Chemistry. I took first that point of the metals because it is a point which on thinking over you will find exceedingly plain and intelligible. But turn now to Chemistry. One great argument which materialists used to take from Chemistry, was this: that as advances were made in what was called organic Chemistry, or the Chemistry of living things, it was shown that the separation made between organic and inorganic Chemistry was artificial. As a matter of fact, they said there was no fundamental difference and both organic and inorganic Chemistry were on the same lines; therefore they thought that the introduction of life as a thing separate and apart from chemical agencies must be given up. That argument was very much strengthened by chemists in the laboratory making certain things which before had been found only as products of vegetables and animals and which had been regarded therefore, as the outcome of living energy. These things were said to be things which could only be produced by living organizations. During the present century however a large number of these bodies have been made by chemists, and they have succeeded here in breaking down the barriers between the organic and the inorganic; and the result was that at once it was said, "you see life is only, after all, the result of chemical energy, and not an outcome from the supreme source, but only something in connection with the chemical energy; you were under a mistake in supposing those things were always found as products of living things, and therefore there is not needed to explain them a source of life from which all living things proceeded. See how the chemist has proved you out of court; see how he has made that which you said



could only come from life." Thus apparently, was one of the arguments knocked down which seemed to prove the life of the world as coming from the life which was Eternal and Supreme. But Chemistry, in the course of these very investigations, going along the lines called organic, has given us an argument stronger than the one attacked. It places within our reach arguments far stronger, far more potent than the one which it destroyed; for it shows that in the organic the atom is not only, as I told you last year, formed by the action of electrical currents out of primary matter, but it shows further that the atom here progresses; that the atom in the mineral kingdom is not at all the same atom of the vegetable in its combining power. It shows in that the change is not a change of material attributes, but a change of inner life, of internal differentiations,—the atom changes within itself, as all living things do; for one of the great signs of life used to be said to be this power of adaptation from within. Take an atom in the mineral kingdom such as carbon. All its combinations are simple, all its combinations are one by one. This fourfold atom can join with others in definite and simple combinations, but when it passes forward, having gone through the mineral kingdom, then by an inner evolution, it changes its combining power and unites with itself to form a number of compounds; forming closed rings, so as to make complicated combinations never found in the mineral kingdom. Taking the old story of evolution as laid down thousands of years ago, not in the modern but in the ancient forms, we learn that this atom is part of the Universal life, that it is not dead matter but a living thing, that atoms are minute lives which go to build up external forms.

We are able now to bring arguments from Chemistry to show that there is atomic evolution in the universe, that the progress of life which we see around us is no dream of the ancient Rishis but a reality. The scientists look only at the form and not at the inner life; but as you study the atom, you realise that this increased power of combination means evolving life within it. Not only is that seen, but it is also now admitted that life cannot be regarded as an outcome of chemical agency. It is admitted that life shows certain specific energies which differentiate it from electrical and chemical affinities, and you may get the phenomena of living things among the energies which science is unable to trace to their source. Once it were thought that life might be explained as the outcome of chemical and electrical agencies, but now it is admitted to be something more. Science now admits that although they are correlated with the life, they are not the life itself, and although they accompany the phenomena they cannot be regarded as their sources. So that from the chemistry which was the greatest hope of the materialist, we may now obtain arguments for its undermining.

Pass from that to electricity and see how here, in the latest discoveries, are arguments that may help our works. It is not only that science has proved that whenever thought is present, electricity is also present, interesting as that is, as showing the close relationship between them; but we are also told that there may be a development of an organ in the brain of man which will take cognizance of electric vibration directly, and not indirectly. Let me show you what I mean. You see the light here because the light makes vibrations and these vibrations strike on

the organ we call the eye. The eye is so put together in its minute parts, that these vibrate in response to the vibrations of the ether; so that whenever these vibrations are present, certain particles in the eye vibrate in response, and give to us the sensation which we call light. Now these vibrations are within narrow limits; there are vibrations in the ether both wider and narrower in wave-length than those which we call light, and to these our eyes do not answer. Therefore if they alone are present, we are in darkness; we cannot see. So again suppose we had developed the organ which is necessary to respond to the electric vibrations, while we had not the organ of sight. Then this room would be dark to us, though filled with the vibrations we now call light. Then the consciousness could not perceive the light. But if we had developed instead of the eye another class of organs which answered to the electric vibrations, and suppose a large electric machine were fixed at one end of the hall, and a strong electric current sent through the hall, we should be able to perceive because the organ in us would vibrate in answer to the electric current, and the current would reach our consciousness through this organ. The consciousness is helpless without an organ that receives from without, and only the body can receive and transfer vibrations to the inner intelligence. That has been very clearly pointed out, and to take a striking illustration used by Professor Crookes: suppose we had no eyes to see the light, and suppose we had an inner organ which answered to electricity. This air would be opaque and we could not see through it, while a silver wire going through the air would be transparent, would be like a tube going through a solid

mass. Though you would be able to perceive along the silver wire, because silver is a good conductor of electricity, you would perceive the air as a solid round the silver which would look like a hole. Do you see how rational the illusory theory can become when you learn a little more science? Do you see how matter is no longer the thing which it was, a solid material, but by a change in the organ of consciousness, what is solid to-day, may be permeable to-morrow? And thus the idea is largely right that regards matter as an illusion; for what we call matter is only a generalization of the impressions received by consciousness by way of the senses. It is the translation in consciousness of the unknown something which works upon us. In fact, what we call matter is but a reflection in the consciousness of an aspect of the Supreme Unknowable Unity, just as the Spirit is the reflection of the other aspect of the same Unknowable Unity. Thus science is bringing us back to this part of the ancient teachings, and if a materialist come to you and says that matter cannot pass from matter, just throw into his mind for him to think over, some of these later facts.

Pass I from that to another closely allied point—that of thought-transference. Thought-transference is now being acknowledged, though for a long time science was very doubtful as to its acceptance, and if you spoke to a man about it he most likely regarded you as a crank, or even called you a fraud, for it was easier to call you a fraud than to admit that they were ignorant. There are men for whom it is impossible to say “I do not know,” but any body can say “you are a fraud.” The ignorant who are not able to understand, people who are most self-opinionated

nearly always call out "fraud," when confronted with the unintelligible. Look now at thought-transference. Thought is a form-producing force; when Brahma thought, worlds appeared. In the ancient books it was always taken to be granted that action is an effect of the mind. But it has been asked contemptuously of the writers of these books, what did they know about modern science? What did they know compared to our advancement? For we are supposed to know everything nearly in this 19th century! Yet after all, the old writers have become justified by the facts. The old teachers have been justified by the later investigations. And some of the best of the younger scientists in England—the old ones are too prejudiced—are ready to take up facts, and they themselves have now performed the experiments that prove that thought-transference is possible. You have a man like Professor Lodge saying that his own experiments have convinced him and that he finds that thought can pass from mind to mind without what is called any material method. Not only he but the Psychical Research Society, which is an exceedingly "respectable" body from the public stand point, have conducted a number of most careful investigations on thought-transference. The results of these were published in a book some three months ago by W. Padmore, a member of the Society. You will find in this book a record of most careful experiments on the transference of thought from one to another, and the evidence is now so strong that it is impossible to put it out of Court.

Oliver Lodge speaking two years ago, said he was sure of thought-transference, but it was alleged that matter might be moved by the action of the will

without material contact, and of that he was not yet convinced. But within the last few months Mr. Lodge has himself carried on a number of experiments which have convinced him, he says, beyond the possibility of doubt, that an article may be moved from one place to another without physical contact at all; that bodies can be moved or suspended in the air without the means of physical support, and that he himself has taken part in experiments which have been carefully arranged by himself and other scientific men and they have proved that it is possible and it may be done over and over again. The experiments carried on included therein, the taking of small articles, and without physical contact passing it from one part of a room to another. The conditions under which these things were done were very rigid. They were carried on in a small island where there were no persons living except the Light-house-keeper and his family. It was a very little island, a mere rock. Mr. Lodge and two or three others got the owner's consent to make their experiments there. They brought with them what is called a medium who belonged to the South of Europe, who could not talk the language of the inhabitants of the island, so that she could not communicate even with the family on the island, she being an absolute stranger never having been there before. They took her into a room with themselves only, with locked door, and there they performed the experiments in which these phenomena were produced. They kept the reporter outside in the balcony so that he could not be within sight of what was occurring. The reporter was put outside with a closed shutter between him and the people in the room. He was to write down what he heard, but he was not

able to see what happened. Mr. Lodge said he was himself absolutely convinced; he said he could not as yet explain it, but he thought it possible there might be a kind of expansion of vital energies by which a person, under certain conditions, could affect a body outside his physical reach. Just as one body can touch another by the exercise of physical energies, so can it draw others towards it. But he is not yet prepared to say how that energy is exercised. That this was, he knows; how it was, he has not yet satisfied himself. But if he were to read some of the ancient books, he could easily find out. He might find that a man does not consist only of what is called the food-sheath or our physical body, but that men have other sheaths in which consciousness may work, without the limitations which are attached to the physical body. When it is working within there, it can also exercise its power, just as much as it can in the physical body, and may lift an object from one place to another by working with a law of nature in which other forces are concerned. The sheath used is what the Theosophists speak of as the "astral" body which can be utilised for the production of these phenomena and though it was said to be a fraud when Madame Blavatsky brought an article from one side of a room to another, yet nearly four years after her death you have Mr. Lodge going into the subject, and asserting after a scientifically rigid repetition of the facts that the thing could be done, thus justifying a statement as possible which had been hastily dismissed as a fraud.

I might speak of many other cases of these latest investigations, and show you how they are undermining the materialistic idea. I may turn to Hypnotism.

and remind you that last year I remarked that it was becoming a public danger—the power of influencing another, the power recognised by science, which one man had of imposing his thoughts on another. I saw that before long nations would be face to face with crimes which they would not know how to deal with. I said to you that unless the exercise of these powers were very carefully guarded, so that men who were unworthy should not be allowed to grasp these hidden powers of nature, there would be great danger to society in making safe particular classes of crime. Since last year that prophecy of mine has proved itself true, and in certain cases both in France and the United States of America, crimes were found to have been worked by the hypnotiser, and the courts have not been able to deal with them, and verdicts of acquittal have been given on the ground that the criminals were not responsible for their actions, that being thrown into the hypnotised state, they could not justly be called to account by the law for the crime which they had committed. So that you have this result justifying the ancient practice of the East in withholding dangerous knowledge of occult forces, and shewing that society in the West is face to face with the peril of men who commit crimes but who cannot be held responsible for them, because committing them under the influence of those who suggest them.

What is to be the outcome of these arguments? What is to be the outcome of these later investigations in Chemistry, electricity, thought-transference, Hypnotism, the moving of bodies and the like? To what are these new lines of investigation tending? They tend to show you that the old doctrine is true, that everything is the outcome of mind, that the



Supreme Mind is, as it were, behind every phenomenon, that matter is regulated in conformity with the dictates of mind, that it is the truth that thought-forces take form in particular manifestations, and so the Universe is only an expression of the Divine Will. And in as much as the mind generates thoughts, and in as much as the Supreme and human minds are one in their essence, therefore the mind of man, in its higher manifestations shares in the powers of the Supreme Mind, and can control matter, can move matter, can model matter, shape matter, and make itself visible in the envelope of thought, and so communicate with other minds without any attempt to speak or hear at all. So that you begin to understand that the saying of the Purāṇa as to creation is not a dream, but that it is from the Supreme Will that forms emanate and build the Universe. And you may understand that this power of the Supreme is more manifest in the power of the mind than in the powers of the body, and that true activity is shown not in running about from place to place, held in the bonds of physical facts, but in quiet thinking, in the use of the imagination and the will. Therefore the Yogī sitting apart, with body absolutely still, with eyes closed, and mouth not communicating with other men, if he be a Yogī indeed, a Yogī in heart not only in dress, he has an inner life a spiritual life, he may do, more than the man of action, by his thoughts, by his meditations, by the forces which are going out from him. On these more than on the work of politicians may turn the life of the nation.

Nor is this work only for the Yogī. Every one of you is sending out thoughts that, passing into the astral atmosphere, will take form, and thence affect

the lives of men and in their totality the nation's future. If only every one of you would give one brief quarter of an hour's thought each morning to the future of India, and send out earnest wishes for her welfare, hopes for her revival, aspirations for her spiritual greatness, believe me you would make a force that would raise the nation and would mould her future. Your thoughts would gather together, modelling, as it were, an ideal India that should take shape in the external world; your prayers would gather together and ascend to the Feet of Mahádeva, whence would flow forth a regenerating energy that would manifest itself in teachers, in leaders, in guides of the people, who could move the hearts of men, and unite them into one mighty Unity. Such is your power over the future, such the service you may render India; for in thought is the power of the Supreme, and it is man's because "Thou art Brahman."



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of Religion and Morals  
Part III. Vol. 1.  
Hinduism

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OF RELIGION AND MORALS

PART III. VOL. I. HINDUISM

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PRESIDENT OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY



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## FOREWORD

THE Third Part of the *Universal Text Book of Religion and Morals* consists of the specialties of the various great living religions. These mark them out from each other, for though they are founded on the same occult facts in Nature, they express those facts in ways suited to different human types. Thus the same facts underlie the Hindu Śhrāddha and the Roman Catholic Mass for the Dead, different as are the outer ceremonies.

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We have gratefully to thank the Central Hindu College, Benares, for allowing us to reprint the Hindu section from the *Sanātana Dharma Advanced Text Book*. We cannot improve on it.

ANNIE BESANT,

*President of the Theosophical Society*



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## CHAPTER I

### THE SAṂSKĀRAS

CERTAIN general principles pervade all religious ceremonies, and these principles must be clearly grasped, otherwise these ceremonies will be unintelligible, and the mind will, sooner or later, revolt against them.

These principles are :

1. Man is a composite Being, a Jīvātman enclosed in various sheaths ; each sheath is related to one of the visible or invisible worlds, and therefore also to its inhabitants. He is thus in touch with these worlds, and in continual relations with them.
2. The Jīvātman and Prakṛti are in a state of unceasing vibration ; these vibrations vary in rapidity, regularity and complexity.
3. The vibrations of the Jīvātman are rapid and regular, becoming more and more complicated, as he unfolds his powers.
4. The vibrations of the matter of the sheaths are continuously affected by those of the Jīvātman, and non-continuously by the various vibrations

which reach each from the world to which its materials belong. In addition, each vibrates continuously according to the fundamental vibration of its world.

5. The Jivātmā endeavours to impose his own vibrations on his sheaths, so that they may respond to him, and work harmoniously with him.
6. He is constantly frustrated in these attempts by the vibrations that reach his sheaths from outside, and set up vibrations in them that are independent of him.
7. He may be very much assisted in his labour by the setting up of vibrations which are in harmony with his own efforts.

These principles must be studied carefully and thoroughly understood.

Then we come to certain special facts, a knowledge of which is also necessary :

A manṭra is a sequence of sounds, and these sounds are vibrations, so that the chanting, loud or low, or the silent repetition, of a manṭra sets up a certain series of vibrations. Now a sound gives rise to a definite form, and a series of pictures is made by successive musical notes ; these may be rendered visible, if suitable scientific means are taken to preserve a record of the vibrations set up by the sounds. Thus the forms created by a manṭra depend on the notes on which the manṭra is chanted ; the manṭra, as it is chanted, gives rise to a series of forms in subtle matter. The nature of the vibrations

—that is their general character, whether constructive or destructive, whether stimulating love, energy, or other emotions—depends on the words of the manṭra. The force with which the manṭra can affect outside objects in the visible or invisible worlds depends on the purity, devotion, knowledge and will-power of the utterer. Such vibrations are included among the “various vibrations” mentioned under Principle 4 as affecting the sheaths, and are also referred to under Principle 7.

The repeated recitation of a manṭra, that is, the repeated setting up of certain vibrations, gradually dominates the vibrations going on in the sheaths, and reduces them all to a regular rhythm, corresponding to its own. Hence the feeling of peace and calm which follows on the recitation of a manṭra.

The name of a Deva, or other Being, mentioned in a manṭra, sets up vibrations similar to those present in the Deva and his sheaths, and, as the manṭra is repeated many times with cumulative effects, the sheaths of the utterer—or of any hearer—gradually repeat these vibrations with ever-increasing force.

यस्य यस्य च मन्त्रस्य प्रोद्दिष्टा या च देवता ।

तदाकारं भवेत्तस्य दैवतं देवतोच्यते ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Whatever the Devatā concerned with a manṭra, his is the form of it; the manṭra of the Deva is said to be the Deva.”

<sup>1</sup> *Yogī Yājñavalkya*, quoted in the *Ābhiṅga-Sūtrāvalī*, p. 13.

Piṅgala, the writer on Vaidika mantras, divides the metres according to the seven fundamental vibrations, and gives the name of the Devatā corresponding to each vibration.

As the matter of the sheaths thus vibrates, it becomes easily penetrable by the influence of the Deva, and very impervious to other influences. Hence the Deva's influence reaches the Jīvātmā, and other influences are shut out.

If the sheaths contain much coarse matter which cannot vibrate in answer to the subtle and rapid vibrations set up by the mantra, the repetition of the mantra may cause pain, disease, death. It is therefore dangerous for an impure person to recite a mantra, or to listen to the recitation of a mantra, or even for a mantra to be inaudibly recited in his presence.

If the sheaths contain some coarse matter, and some pure, the coarse matter will be shaken out, as the sheaths vibrate in answer to the mantra, and pure matter will be drawn in to replace that which is shaken out.

But one important fact must be remembered, since, in a mantra, the *sound* and rhythm are all important :

मन्त्रो हीनः स्वरतो वर्णतो वा मिथ्याप्रयुक्तो न तमर्थमाह ।  
स वाग्वज्रो यजमानं हिनस्ति यथेन्द्रशत्रुः स्वरतोऽपराधात्<sup>1</sup>

“ When the mantra is defective in Svāra or Varna, it is incorrectly directed and does not declare the

<sup>1</sup> *Vyākaraṇa-Mohābhāṣya*, I, i, 1.

‘true meaning. That lightning-word (then reacts upon and) slays the performer (of the sacrifice) himself as (the word) ‘Indra-Shaṭru’ for fault of Svara (slew Vṛttra, the performer of the sacrifice, and the enemy of Indra, instead of slaying Indra the enemy of Vṛttra, as intended).”

A good knowledge of Samskṛt is therefore necessary.

The magnetic properties of objects are also important in this matter of vibrations. *All* objects are always vibrating, and thus affect the sheaths of other objects near them. To affect the sheaths in any particular way, it is necessary to choose objects which have the desired vibrations.

All rites and ceremonies ordained by Seers and Sages are based on these principles and facts, which govern the mantras and the objects used with them. They are all intended to aid the Jīvātmā in reducing his sheaths to obedience, in purifying them, and in making them strong against evil; or else to shape external conditions to man’s benefit, protection and support.

If these principles and facts are understood, the student will see clearly the reason of many injunctions and prohibitions which he finds in the Sanātana Dharma as to by whom, and in whose presence, mantras may be recited, what substances should be used in different ceremonies, what offerings should be made, and so on. Instead of a meaningless labyrinth of ceremonies sounds, objects and gestures, he will see an ordered system, intended to help the Jīvātmā to unfold his

powers more rapidly, and to overcome the obstacles in his way.

The संस्काराः<sup>1</sup> Saṃskārāḥ, are variously given, some lists enumerating only ten, others rising to a higher and higher number up to fifty-two. Among those which are specially called the ten Saṃskāras, some mark the important stage of a man's life up to and including his marriage; the remainder are ceremonies which may be performed daily or on special occasions, or are subsidiary to some of the Ten.<sup>2</sup>

The Ten principal and generally recognised Saṃskāras are :

1. गर्भाधानं	Garbhāḍhānam.
2. पुंसवनं	Pumsavanam.
3. सीमन्तोन्नयनं	Sīmantonmayanam.
4. जातकर्म	Jātakarma.
5. नामकरणं	Nāmakaraṇam.
6. अन्नप्राशनं	Annaprāśhanam.
7. चूडाकरणं	Chudākaraṇam.
8. उपनयनं	Upanayanam.
9. समावर्तनं	Samāvartanam.
10. विवाहः	Vivāhaḥ.

वैदिकैः कर्मभिः पुण्यैर्निषेकादिर्द्विजन्मनाम् ।

कार्यः शरीरसंस्कारः पावनः प्रेत्य चेह च ॥<sup>2</sup>

“ With sacred Vaidika rites should be performed the Saṃskāras of the body, namely, Niṣheka and the

<sup>1</sup> In the Introduction to Mandlik's edition of the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* several lists are given, pp. xxx—xxxii.

<sup>2</sup> *Manusmṛti* ii, 26.

rest, of the twice-born, which purify here and hereafter."

The whole life of the Āryan is thus guarded from conception to cremation.

The Garbhādhānam sanctifies the creative act, not to be undertaken carelessly, lightly, nor during the presence of any evil emotion in the mind of husband or wife, nor for the sake of mere enjoyment, but with the purpose of exercising the divine power of creation, the creating of a human body. The husband prays that a child may be conceived. Thus the first dawning of the new life is amid the vibration of a mantra (*Rgveda*, X, lxxxv, 21, 22).

The Annamaya-kosha and Prāṇamaya-kosha are being formed within the mother's womb, and in the third month the Pumsavanam is performed with mantras—*Rgveda*, I, i, 3; III, iv, 9; V, xxxvii, 2; II, iii, 9—for the forming of a male child.

At the seventh month takes place the Simantonayanam, or parting of the hair of the mother, at which the *Rgveda* mantras, X, cxxi, 10; clxxxiv, 1; II, xxxii, 4-8, are recited, guarding her from evil influences, and bringing to bear on the growing sheaths the most harmonious and health-giving vibrations.

These three Samskāras protect both mother and child, and to the latter bring all helpful vibrations to shape the developing body. The occult knowledge, which was thus utilised for the health and beauty of the evolving form, having disappeared for the most part, these useful and beautiful ceremonies



have fallen into desuetude, to the great loss in health and vigour of the race.

The next Saṃskāra, the ceremony performed at birth, is the Jātakarma, the father welcoming his new-born child, praying for its long life, intelligence, wisdom, and well-being, and feeding it with gold, honey and butter.<sup>1</sup>

Shāṅkhāyana *Gṛhya-Sūtras* (i, 24), Āshvalāyana *Gṛhya-Sūtras* (i, 15), and Āpastamba *Gṛhya-Sūtras* (i, 15) refer to this ceremony. Āshvalāyana gives *Rgveda*, II, xxi, 6 and III, xxxvi, 10, to be recited at the conclusion of the Jātakarma ceremony.

When the child is eleven days old, or on the tenth or twelfth day, the Nāmakaraṇam, the naming ceremony, is performed, with the *Rgveda* mantra, I, xci, 7. The name given should be according to caste :

मङ्गल्यं ब्राह्मणस्य स्यात् क्षत्रियस्य बलान्वितम् ।  
 वैश्यस्य धनसंयुक्तं शूद्रस्य तु जुगुप्सितम् ॥  
 शर्मवद्ब्राह्मणस्य स्याद्राज्ञो रक्षासमन्वितम् ।  
 वैश्यस्य पुष्टिसंयुक्तं शूद्रस्य प्रैष्यसंयुतम् ॥  
 स्त्रीणां सुखोद्यमकूरं विस्पष्टार्थं मनोहरम् ।  
 मङ्गल्यं दीर्घवर्णान्तमाशीर्वादाभिधानवत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“ Let a Brāhmaṇa's be auspicious, a Kṣhatṭriya's full of power, a Vaishya's connected with wealth, and a Shūdra's, with lowliness.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, ii, 29.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 31—33.

“A Brāhmaṇa's implying happiness ; a Kṣhāṭṭriya's, protection ; a Vaishya's, prosperity ; a Shūdra's service.

“Women's easily pronounceable, not harsh, with a clear meaning, pleasing, auspicious, ending in a long vowel, (soft) like the utterance of a benediction.”

In the sixth month comes the Annaprāśhanam, the first feeding with solid food, with the *R̥gveda* mantras, IV, xii, 4, 5 ; IX, lxvi, 19 ; and I, xxii, 15.

In the first or third year—or, according to the *Gṛhya-Sūtras*, in the fifth for a Kṣhāṭṭriya and the seventh for a Vaishya—the Chūdākaraṇam, the tonsure, or shaving of the head, is performed.

The Karṇavedha, or ear-boring ceremony, is performed at the fifth or seventh year, or even later. In Southern India it is sometimes performed on the twelfth day after birth or at the close of the first year, or with the Chūdākaraṇam. It is not mentioned in the authoritative lists of Samskāras, but in modern Indian life it is regularly performed.<sup>1</sup>

By these ceremonies the young body is constantly harmonised and guarded, and says Yājñavalkya :

एवमेनः शमं याति बीजगर्भसमुद्भवं ।<sup>2</sup>

“Thus is the sin (hereditary defect) arising from defect of seed and embryo allayed.”

These Samskāras belong to the child-stage of life.<sup>4</sup> With the next, the Upanayanam, the stage of youth

<sup>1</sup> See *Parāshara Gṛhya-Sūtra*, 11, i, and *Ccāṭhara-Bhāṣya* thereon.

<sup>2</sup> *loc. cit.*, i, 13.

may be said to begin. The lad is now to put away the toys of childhood, and is to begin the life of study which is to fit him to take his place in the world.

The Upanayanam is the ceremony of the investiture with the sacred thread, the initiation which is the "second birth," given by the Āchārya, and which constitutes the boy a द्विजः, Dvijah, twice-born.

कामान्माता पिता चैनं यदुत्पादयतो मिथः ।  
 संभूतिं तस्य तां विद्याद्यद्योनावभिजायते ॥  
 आचार्यस्त्वस्य यां जातिं विधिवद्वेदपारगः ।  
 उत्पादयति सावित्र्या सा सत्या साऽजराऽमरा ॥<sup>1</sup>

"That the father and mother give birth to him from mutual desire, so that he is born from the womb, let this be known as his physical birth.

"But that birth which is given, according to the ordinance, through the Sāvitrī, by the preceptor who has mastered the Vedas, that is the true birth, the unaging and immortal."

The word Upanāyana or Upanayana, means bringing near—bringing near to the preceptor, who initiates the boy, by giving him the sacred manṭra called गायत्री Gāyatrī.<sup>2</sup> Shāṅkhāyana, Āshvalāyana and Āpastamba agree with Yājñavalkya in their age limits. Manu gives the age as the fifth year for a Brāhmaṇa, the sixth for a Kṣhattriya and the eighth for a Vaishya,

<sup>1</sup> *Monismurk*, ii, 147, 148.

<sup>2</sup> So named because it protects him who chants it : "गायन्तं त्रायते" इति ।

making the limit, up to which initiation may be given, the sixteenth, twenty-second and twenty-fourth years respectively.<sup>1</sup> Yājñavalkya puts the lower limits at the eighth, eleventh and twelfth years, and the higher at the same ages as Manu.<sup>2</sup>

The boy is dressed in a kaupīna, and then in a new garment, and wears a girdle of Muñja grass, if a Brāhmaṇa; of a bow-string, if a Kṣhatṭriya; of woollen thread, if a Vaishya. The Āchārya puts on him according to his caste an antelope skin, a spotted deer skin, or a cow skin, and knots the girdle round him.<sup>3</sup> He then invests him with the यज्ञोपवीतं, Yajñopaviṭam, the sacrificial thread, and after certain questions and answers he sprinkles him with water, recites certain formulas and mantras, and, placing his hand on the pupil's heart, he says: "Under my will I take thy heart; my mind shall thy mind follow: in my word thou shalt rejoice with all thy heart; may Brhaspati join thee to me." He then teaches him the Gāyatrī, and gives him a staff, the length and the wood of which vary according to the caste of the boy.<sup>4</sup>

The whole ceremony represents the spiritual birth of the Ārya, and all its parts are significant. As spirits are sexless, the kaupīna symbolically makes him sexless, and being such the Brāhmacārī is bound to lead a life of chastity or celibacy. The new garment,

<sup>1</sup> *loc. cit.*, ii, 37, 38.

<sup>2</sup> *loc. cit.*, i, 14, 37.

<sup>3</sup> These significant symbols have been dropped in modern India, and all castes wear the same.

<sup>4</sup> See, for full details, the *Shāṅkhāyana Gṛhya-Sūtra*, ii, i—vi.

represents the new body. The girdle is wound round thrice to show that the boy has to study the Saṃhitās, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣats. The skin represents the ascetic life he should lead.

The sacrificial thread consists of three threads, knotted together, and signifies the various triads which exist in the universe: the triple nature of Spirit, Sat-Chiṭ-Ānanda; the triple nature of matter, Sattva, Rajas, Tamas; the Trimūrṭi; the triple Jīvātīnā, Jñāna-Ichchhā-Kriyā; the three words, Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svah; mind, speech and body, each again divided into three as regards action; and so on. And he who wears the thread should exercise a triple control, over his mind, speech and body.<sup>1</sup>

The staff represents, as a rod, like the triple wand of the Samyāsī, the control that a student should exercise over thoughts, words and actions.

वाग्दण्डोऽथ मनोदण्डः कर्मदण्डस्तथैव च ।

यस्यैते निहिता बुद्धौ त्रिदण्डीति स उच्यते ॥

त्रिदण्डमेतन्निक्षिप्य सर्वभूतेषु मानवः ।

कामक्रोधौ तु संयम्य ततः सिद्धिं निगच्छति ॥<sup>2</sup>

“The rod that rules the voice, the rod that rules the mind, the rod that rules the acts—he in whose Buddhi these are maintained is called a Tridandī.

• “The man who exercises this triple rod in respect to all creatures, controlling desire and anger, he attains perfection.”

<sup>1</sup> See *Manusmṛti*, xii, 4—11.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, xii, 10, 11.

Then came the end of the student stage, the Samāvartanam; the pupil presented his teacher with a gift, and received permission to take the formal bath, which marked the close of his pupilage.

गुरवे तु वरं दत्वा स्नायीत तदनुज्ञया ।  
वेदं व्रतानि वा पारं नीत्वा ह्युभयमेव वा ॥<sup>1</sup>

“To the teacher having given what is wished for, let him bathe with his permission, having completed the Vedas, the Vratas, or both.”

Then he returned home and performed the Samāvartanam, the returning ceremony. He was then called a Snātaka, and was ready to marry and enter the household state.

गुरुणानुमतः स्नात्वा समावृत्तो यथाविधि ।  
उद्वहेत् द्विजो भार्या सवर्णा लक्षणान्विताम् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“Having bathed, with the permission of his teacher, and having become Samāvṛtta (returned) according to rule, let a twice-born man marry a wife of his caste, endowed with auspicious marks.”

Thus closed the student stage, and with the Vivāha, the marriage, the life of the householder began. Now he was to take up his duties as man and begin the payment of his debts by sacrifice, by study and by begetting children.

The ceremonies accompanying marriage vary much with local custom, and the simple and dignified

<sup>1</sup> *Yājñavalkya*, i, 51.

<sup>2</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 4.

original ceremony has become much overlaid by show and pomp. The Vaidika mantras show the spirit in which marriage should be undertaken, and it is these which the true Āryan should lay stress on, not the modern glitter and show.

The Sūkṭa of Sūrya's bridal gives a picture of the marriage ceremony.

गृहान्गच्छ गृहपत्नी यथासौ  
वशिनी त्वं विदथमा वदासि ॥  
इह प्रियं प्रजया ते समृध्यता-  
मस्मिन्गृहे गार्हपत्याय जागृहि ।  
एना पत्या तन्वं संसृजस्वा-  
धाजित्री विदथमावदाथः ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Go to the house as the house's mistress ; as ruler, speak thou to the household folk.

“Here be thou beloved with thy children ; in this house be vigilant to rule thy household. With this man, thy husband, be productive ; speak ye to your household-folk full of years.”

The bridegroom speaks to the bride :

गृभ्णामि ते सौभगत्वीय हस्तं मया पत्या जरदष्टिर्यथासः ।<sup>2</sup>

“I take thy hand for good fortune ; mayst thou grow old with me, thy husband.”

<sup>1</sup> *Rigveda*, X, 1<sup>xxxv</sup>, 26, 27.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 36.

· They walk round water and the sacred fire hand in hand, and the bride sacrifices grains in the fire, praying :

आयुष्मानस्तु मे पतिरेधन्तां ज्ञातयो मम ।<sup>1</sup>

“ May my husband live long ; may my kinsfolk increase.”

Agni is said to give the bride to the bridegroom, he who is over the Lord of the Hearth.

· The Sūkṭa prays, when the bride goes to her new home :

इहैव स्तं मा वियौष्टं विश्वमायुर्व्यश्नुतम् ।

क्रीडन्तौ पुत्रैर्नष्टभिर्मोदमानौ स्वे गृहे ॥<sup>2</sup>

“ Here dwell ye, be not parted ; enjoy full age. Play and rejoice with sons and grandsons in your own house.”

And it prays that the bride, lovely and gentle-hearted, may bring bliss to the home, to men and animals, ruling the home, pious, mother of heroes.

The law of marriage is given by Manu :

अन्योन्यस्याव्यभीचारो भवेदामरणान्तिकः ।

एष धर्मः समासेन ज्ञेयः स्त्रीपुंसयोः परः ॥

तथा नित्यं यतेयातां स्त्रीपुंसौ तु कृतक्रियौ ।

यथा नातिचरेतां तौ वियुक्तावितरेतरम् ॥<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Śaṅkhāyana's *Gṛhya-Sūtras*, I, xiv, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *Rigveda*, X, lxxxv, 42.

<sup>3</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, ix, 101, 102.



“Let there be faithfulness to each other until death; this, in short, should be known as the highest duty of husband and wife.

“So, let husband and wife ever strive, doing all their duties, that they may not, separating from each other, wander apart.”

Such was the Āryan ideal of marriage, perfect faith of each to each till death, and Āryan literature shows how nobly that ideal was fulfilled. Let the student look on marriage in the old light, and we may see men and women again of the old type.

Thus, in the ancient days, was the young man launched into manhood, with mantras and with prayers; but Gauṭama's saying must ever be laid to heart:

“He who has the forty-two Saṃskāras, but has not the eight virtues of the Self, will not obtain Brahman, nor will he go to Brahmāloka. But he who has only a part of the forty-two Saṃskāras but has the eight virtues of the Self, he will attain to Brahman and go to Brahmāloka.”

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## CHAPTER II

### SHRĀDDHA

THE longer lists of Saṃskāras include the various ceremonies performed on behalf of those who have departed from the physical world, the ceremonies that fall under the general name of श्राद्धम् Shrāddham. The Āryan has never felt the presence of a thick barrier between the visible and invisible worlds, between the "living" and the "dead". All his religion brings the invisible worlds into continual contact with the visible, the Devas are as real as the men. And he recognises the continued existence of the Jīvātmā so vividly that the death of the body is not to him a matter of terror and anxiety, but a habitual thought, and "the dead" are never regarded as dead, but merely as living elsewhere. The habitual thought of transmigration, linking life with life, reduces any particular death to a mere incident in an indefinite series, and the Jīvātmā, not the body, assumes predominant importance. Still more vividly is this idea that the Jīvātmā is the man impressed on the minds of Āryans by the recurring Shrāddhas, in which the continued existence of those who have left the physical world is

brought before the eyes of the present dwellers upon earth.

The duties "an Āryan owes to the dead commence from the moment the life departs, and are divided into two classes—Preṭa-kriyā and Piṭṛ-kriyā or Shrāddha—funeral and ancestral ceremonies. The dead is called the प्रेतः Preṭaḥ, the departed, till the Sapindikarāṇa is performed, when he becomes a Piṭṛ.

At death the man, clothed in the Prāṇamaya-kosha, leaves the Annamaya-kosha, and as all the Vaidika Saṃskāras have been framed to help the processes of nature, the Preṭa-kriyā is intended to neutralise the tendency of the Prāṇamaya-kosha to hang about the Annamaya-kosha as long as the latter is whole, and thus to retain the real man in Bhūloka after the normal course of nature requires him to leave it.

The first important thing to be done is to destroy the Annamaya-kosha, and this is done by cremation. In the words of the *Chhāṇḍogyopanishad* :

तं प्रेतं दिष्टमितोऽग्नय एव हरन्ति यत एवेतो यतः संभूतो भवति । <sup>1</sup>

"They carry him who has departed, as ordained, to the fire whence he came, whence he was born."

Before the fire is applied to the corpse, the celebrant walks three times round the spot where it is laid, and sprinkles water on it with the verse *Rg-veda*, X, xiv, 9 :

"अपेतं वीतं विच सर्पतातः.....।

<sup>1</sup> V. ix, 2.

“Go away, withdraw, and depart from here.”  
While the body is burning, *Rgveda*, X, xiv, 7 :

प्रेहि प्रेहि पथिभिः.....।

“Go on, go on, on the ancient paths,” is to be recited.

On the third day after the cremation the remnants of the bones are gathered and buried, or thrown into running water, thus completing the disintegration of the Annamaya-kosha. The Prāṇamaya-kosha then rapidly disintegrates.

The next work to be done is to help to disintegrate the lowest part of the Manomaya-kosha and thus change the Preṭa, the departed, into the Pitr, the ancestor.

For this purpose have been framed the Ēkoḍḍiṣhta-shrāddha and the Sapiṇḍana-shrāddha. The Ēkoḍḍiṣhta-shrāddha is one directed to a single dead person, whereas a Shrāddha proper is directed to three generations of Pitr̥s or to all Pitr̥s. The offerings connected with it are intended to be offered during a whole year. No āvāhana, inviting, takes place in this ceremony, nor the putting of food into the fire, nor do the Vishveḍevas take part in it.<sup>1</sup>

The Ēkoḍḍiṣhta-shrāddhas are completed by the performance, of the Sapiṇḍikaraṇa, the reception of the Preṭa into the community of the Pitr̥s. According to Shāṅkhāyana, the celebrant fills four water-pots with sesamum, scents, and water—three for the fathers,

<sup>1</sup> Shāṅkhāyana's *Gṛhya-Sūtras*, iv, 2, 5.

one for the newly dead person—and pours the pot that belongs to the newly dead person into the pots of the Piṭṛs with the two verses, *Vājasaneyya-Samhitā*, xix, 45, 46.<sup>1</sup>

If these ceremonies should be properly performed, the subtle parts of the offerings made during their performance feed the deceased till he goes to Piṭṛloka. The mantras facilitate his passage thereto and he takes his place among the Piṭṛs.

Then “the fourth is dropped,” i.e., in the ceremonies the great-grandfather of the deceased person is not invoked, the deceased, his father and grandfather forming three Piṭṛs.

The numerous periodical ceremonies that are performed to the Piṭṛs proper are technically Shrāddhas. At a Shrāddha the Piṭṛs are the deities to whom the sacrifice is offered; the Brāhmaṇas who are fed represent the Āhavanīya fire.<sup>2</sup>

The Ābhuḍāyika-shrāddhas or Nāndī-shrāddhas are performed on the occasions of rejoicings, such as the birth of a son, the marriage of a son or daughter, nāmakarṇa, jātakarma, chūḍākarṇa, etc. In this ceremony the Nāndīnukha Piṭṛs glad-faced ancestors, those that have gone to the Svargaloka, are invoked, and an even number of Brāhmaṇas are fed in the forenoon.

Of all the ancient ceremonies, Shrāddhas alone are still performed with any appreciable degree of religious fervour and it is hoped that an intelligent

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, iv, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Āpastamba's *Dharma-Sūtras*, II, vii, 16 (3).

understanding of the rational basis of them will increase the Shrāddhā, faith, without which a Shrāddha cannot properly deserve the name.

We shall see, in studying the five Daily Sacrifices—Chapter IV—that the Piṭṛ-Yajña has its place among them. On the new-moon day this is followed by the monthly Shrāddha ceremony, called the पिण्डान्वाहार्यकं, Piṇḍānvāharyakam, and पार्वणश्राद्धम् • Pārvaṇa-shrāddham, one of the seven पाकयज्ञाः, Pākāyajñāḥ, or sacrifices with baked offerings.

Sacrifices to the Piṭṛs are offered in the afternoon, facing south,<sup>1</sup> and the ground should slope southwards.<sup>2</sup> On the new-moon day, Kusha or Darbha grass is arranged for seats, and an odd number of Brāhmaṇas are invited. Great stress is laid on the character and learning of these Brāhmaṇas.

यथेरिणे बीजमुप्त्वा न वप्ता लभते फलम् ।

तथानृचे हविर्दत्त्वा न दाता लभते फलम् ॥<sup>3</sup>

“As the sower having sown seed in barren soil, obtains no harvest, so the giver, having given sacrificial food to one ignorant of the R̥chas, obtains no harvest.”

नश्यन्ति हव्यकव्यानि नराणामविजानताम् ।<sup>4</sup>

भस्मभूतेषु विप्रेषु मोहादत्तानि दातृभिः ॥

<sup>1</sup> Apastamba's *Yajña-Parbhāṣhā*, sūtra, lx.

<sup>2</sup> *Manuśmṛti*, iii, 206.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 142.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, iii, 97.

“The offerings of ignorant men to Devas and Piṭṛs perish, being gifts from deluded givers to Brāhmaṇas who are ashes.”

ब्राह्मणो ह्यनधीयानस्तृणाग्निरिव शाम्यति ।

तस्मै हव्यं न दातव्यं न हि भस्मनि हूयते ॥<sup>1</sup>

“A Brāhmaṇa who is ignorant goeth out like a grass fire ; to him sacrificial food ought not to be given ; offerings are not poured into ashes.”

So, also, Hiranyakeshin says that the Brāhmaṇas invited to the Shrāddha must be pure and versed in the mantras.<sup>2</sup>

Having gathered these and prepared the materials for the sacrifice, and offered Haviḥ in the Dakṣiṇāgni, the sacrificer calls to the Piṭṛs, and sprinkles water. According to Manu, he should make three cakes, offering them to his father, grandfather and great-grandfather, pour out water near the cakes, and give to the Brāhmaṇas very small portions of them ; after this the Brāhmaṇas should be fed in the afternoon.<sup>3</sup> In the *Grhya-Sūtras* it is directed that the Brāhmaṇas are first fed, and that then the offerings are to be made to the Piṭṛs. The domestic Bali offerings should follow the Shrāddha.<sup>4</sup>

Similar ceremonies may be performed in the dark fortnight, and the Ashtakā ceremony is sometimes offered to the Piṭṛs.

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, 168.

<sup>2</sup> *Grhya-Sūtras*, II, i, 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 208—237.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 265.

. It must be remembered that Pitṛloka and Pretaloka, or Yamaloka, are both regions in Bhuvarloka, and influence from the earth, Bhūrloka, reaches both of these. The influence of Piṇḍa offerings reaches throughout Pretaloka; the three higher generations (fourth, fifth and sixth) are affected by offerings of remnants of food. Including the offerer, only seven generations can mutually influence each other by the giving and receiving of food. Three generations beyond these can receive only libations of water. Influence from below can go no further, for by that time an average man is supposed to have passed into Svarga, and the whole object of Shrāddha is to facilitate his passage thither.

The general principles of the Shrāddha of a person recently departed are adaptations of the principles underlying all Saṃskāras.

Shrāddhas may, generally speaking, be regarded as serving the same purpose with reference to the subtler bodies, as is served by the prenatal and natal Saṃskāras with reference to the gross physical body. Having helped the Jīvātmā going from here to a fair birth in the other world, the human helper has completed his duty, and cannot go any further or give other help. The agencies of the other world thereafter take up the Jīvātmā into their own exclusive charge.

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## CHAPTER III

### SHAUCHAM.

THE rules for purifying the body are based on scientific facts as to the Annamaya- and Prāṇamaya-koshas.

The Annamaya-kosha is composed of solids, liquids and gases, and infinitesimal particles of these are constantly passing off from the body. Apart altogether from the obvious daily losses sustained by the body in the excrements and sweat, there is this ceaseless emission of minute particles, alike in night and day, whether the body is waking or sleeping. The body is like a fountain, throwing off a constant spray. Every physical object is in this condition, stones, trees, animals, men ; all are ceaselessly throwing off these tiny particles, invisible because of their extreme minuteness, and are, as ceaselessly, receiving the rain of particles from others which fills the air in which they live, and which they breathe in with every breath. A continual interchange is thus going on between all physical bodies ; no one can approach another without being sprinkled by the other, and sprinkling him in turn, with particles from their

respective bodies. Everything a man goes near receives some particles from his body; every object he touches retains a minute portion of his body on its surface; his clothes, his house, his furniture, all receive from him this rain of particles, and rain particles from themselves on him in turn.

The Prāṇamaya-kosha, composed of the physical ethers and animated by the life-energies, affects all around it, and is affected by all around it, not by emitting or receiving particles, but by sending out, and being played upon by, vibrations which cause waves, currents, in the etheric matter. The life-waves, magnetism-waves, go out from each man as ceaselessly as the fine rain of particles from his Annamaya-kosha. And similar waves from others play upon him, as ceaselessly as the fine rain of particles from others falls on him.

Thus every man is being affected by others, and is affecting them, in the physical world, in these two ways: by a rain of particles given off from the Annamaya-kosha, and by waves given off from the Prāṇamaya-kosha.

The object of the rules of Shaucham is to make this inevitable influence of one person on another a source of health instead of a source of disease, and also to preserve and strengthen the bodily and mental health of the performer. The Annamaya-kosha is to be kept scrupulously clean, so that it may send off a rain of health on every one and everything that is near it; and the Prāṇamaya-kosha is to be reached by the mantra-produced vibrations in

the etheric matter which permeates the things used in the ceremonies—as etheric matter permeates everything—so that these vibrations may act beneficially on it, and may cleanse and purify it.

The rules affecting bodily cleanliness are definite and strict. On rising, the calls of nature are first to be attended to,<sup>1</sup> plenty of water being used for cleansing purposes, and then the mouth and teeth are to be washed, and a bath taken. A man is to be careful that no unclean matter remains near his dwelling ;

दूरादावसथान्मूत्रं दूरात्पादावसेचनम् ।  
उच्छिष्टान्नं निषेकं च दूरादेव समाचरेत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“Far from his dwelling let him cast excrement, far the water used for washing his feet, far the leavings of food, and bath-waters.”

Much disease is caused by the neglect of this rule, the filthy surroundings of dwellings causing ill-health and general loss of vigour. In modern city life, the community takes on this duty by an organised system of drainage, but this should be on the same principle of conveying noxious matters far away from all habitations ; and it is part of the duty of a good citizen to see that rivers in the neighbourhood of cities are not poisoned, nor filth allowed to accumulate to the injury of the public health.

A man must wash, in some cases bathe the whole body, before taking part in any religious ceremony, and sip water with appropriate mantras.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iv, 45—52, 56—152.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, iv, 151.

आचम्य प्रयतो नित्यमुभे संध्ये समाहितः ।  
शुचौ देशे जपंजप्यमुपासीत यथाविधि ॥<sup>1</sup>

“ Being purified by sipping water, he shall always daily worship in the two twilights with a collected mind, in a pure place, performing Japa according to rule.”

He must wash before and after meals.

उपस्पृश्य द्विजो नित्यमन्नमद्यात्समाहितः ।  
मुक्ता चोपस्पृशेत्संयगद्भिः खानि च संस्पृशेत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“ Having washed, the twice-born should eat food always with a collected mind ; having eaten, let him wash well with water, sprinkling the sense-organs.”

If a man has touched anything impure, a person or an object,

स्नानेन शुध्यति ।<sup>3</sup>

“ by bathing he is purified. ”

मृत्तोर्यैः शुध्यते शोध्यम् ।<sup>4</sup>

“ By earth and water that which should be made pure is purified. ”

These are the two great purifiers, though alkalis and acids may be used for cleaning copper, iron, brass, pewter, tin and lead ; earthen vessels can be

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, ii, 222.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, ii, 53.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, v, 85.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 108.

purified by burning, houses by sweeping, cowdung and whitewash; other methods are given for special substances. So long as any smell or stain remains on an object it is not to be considered pure.<sup>1</sup>

ज्ञानं तपोऽग्निराहारो मृन्मनो वार्युपाञ्जनम् ।

वायुः कर्मार्ककालौ च शुद्धेः कर्तृणि देहिनाम् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“Wisdom, austerity, fire, food, earth, mind, water, plastering, wind, rites, the sun and time; are the purifiers of human beings.”

But no body can be truly pure unless the mind and heart be pure :

अद्भिर्गात्राणि शुध्यन्ति मनः सत्येन शुध्यति ।

विद्यातपोभ्यां भूतात्मा बुद्धिर्ज्ञानेन शुध्यति ॥<sup>3</sup>

“The body is purified by water, the mind by truth, the soul by knowledge and austerity, the reason by wisdom.”

Besides the impurities due to obvious causes, the birth or death of Sapiṇdas, or of relatives not Sapiṇdas, causes impure magnetic currents in the Prāṇamaya-kosha and therefore sullies the Annamaya-kosha. In the case of Sapiṇdas, the impurity lasts from ten days to one month according to the caste of the parties concerned. In the case of the death of little children the impurity lasts for a very short time.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, 105—127.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, v, 109.

The relationship of Sapiṇḍa ceases with the seventh remove of relationship through males. In the case of relations not Sapiṇḍas, the impurity lasts three days, or less, decreasing according to the remoteness of the relationship. During the period of impurity sacrificial oblations, recitation of mantras, and some other religious duties have to be given up. No one must eat the food of, or touch, one impure. But the customs vary much in these respects in the different parts of the country and even the word Sapiṇḍa is differently interpreted.

Further details may be studied in the Smṛtis, and may be applied by the student to his own life, in conformity with caste and family customs and having regard to the changed conditions of life. Infectious diseases of all kinds run riot where the rules of individual purity are disregarded, and where houses, clothes and articles in daily use are not scrupulously cleaned. Modern science is re-establishing, with infinite labour and pains, the facts on which these ancient rules were based, and a clear understanding of the reason for their imposition will render obedience to them willing and cheerful.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE FIVE DAILY SACRIFICES

THE application of the great Law of Sacrifice to the daily life of the Āryan was made by the laying down of rules for making sacrifices, by which he gradually learned to regard himself as part of a connected whole, a whole of which the parts were mutually interdependent, owing to each other's mutual aid and support. When this lesson had been thoroughly assimilated, then, and then only, might the man lay aside these duties, entering on the life of the Sannyāsi who, having sacrificed all his possessions and himself, had nothing left to offer.

The various bodies or vehicles of man are nourished and helped to grow severally, by the initial energy received from parents, by food, by sympathy and help from his fellow-beings, by magnetic influences, and by knowledge and illumination. He therefore owes a fivefold debt to nature: and it is but meet and proper that, if he would flourish, he should fully recognise his indebtedness and do his best to pay back his debt. As stated before, he is not an isolated creature, and his whole well-being depends upon his co-operation with nature, which works not so much

for the exaltation of individuals as for the steady evolution of all creation. The sacrifices prescribed by Hindū lawgivers are nothing more than an enumeration of the duties which thus devolve on every man. They embrace all the planes of his existence, and are therefore conducive to his highest growth.

There are thus five महायज्ञाः, Mahāyajñāḥ, great sacrifices, to be offered every day, and seven पाकयज्ञाः, Pākayajñāḥ, literally cooked sacrifices, occurring at stated intervals. In addition to these, there are the fourteen Shrūta sacrifices, divided into हविर्यज्ञाः, Havir-yajñāḥ, offerings of grains, etc., and सोमयज्ञाः, Soma-yajñāḥ, offerings of Soma. Some of these are of daily, others of occasional, obligation.

The five great sacrifices are as follows :

1. ब्रह्मयज्ञः Brahma-yajñāḥ, called also वेदयज्ञः, Veda-yajñāḥ, Sacrifice to Brahman or the Vedas.
2. देवयज्ञः Deva-yajñāḥ, Sacrifice to Devas.
3. पितृयज्ञः Pitṛ-yajñāḥ, Sacrifice to Pitṛs.
4. भूतयज्ञः Bhūta-yajñāḥ, Sacrifice to Bhūtas.
5. मनुष्ययज्ञः Manuṣhya-yajñāḥ, Sacrifice to men.

These are laid down by Manu among the duties of the householder.

अध्यापनं ब्रह्मयज्ञः पितृयज्ञस्तु तर्पणम् ।

होमो दैवो बलिर्भौतो नृयज्ञोऽतिथिपूजनम् ॥

\* \* \* \* \*



अहुतं च हुतं चैव तथा प्रहुतमेव च ।  
 ब्राह्म्यं हुतं प्राशितं च पञ्चयज्ञान्प्रचक्षते ॥  
 जपोऽहुतं हुतो होमः प्रहुतो भौतिको बलिः ।  
 ब्राह्म्यं हुतं द्विजाग्न्यर्चा प्राशितं पितृतर्पणम् ॥  
 स्वाध्याये नित्ययुक्तः स्यादैवे चैवेह कर्मणि ।  
 दैवे कर्मणि युक्तो हि विभर्तीदं चराचरम्<sup>1</sup> ॥

“Teaching is the Brahma sacrifice, Tarpaṇa (the offering of water) is the Piṭṛ sacrifice, Homa (the pouring into the fire) the Deva sacrifice, Bali (food) is the Bhūta sacrifice, hospitality to guests the Maṇuṣhya sacrifice.

\* \* \* \* \*

“They call the five sacrifices Ahuṭa, Huṭa, Prahuṭa, Brāhmya-huṭa, and Prāshiṭa.

“Japa is Ahuṭa, Homa is Huṭa, the Bali given to Bhūtas is Prahuṭa, respectful reception of the twice-born is Brāhmya-huṭa, and the Piṭṛ-tarpaṇa is Prāshiṭa.

“Let a man ever engage in Veda study, and in the rites of the Devas ; engaged in the rites of the Devas, he supports the movable and immovable kingdoms.”

And again :

ऋषयः पितरो देवा भूतान्यतिथयस्तथा ।  
 आंशासते कुटुम्बिभ्यस्तेभ्यः कार्यं विजानता ॥  
 स्वाध्यायेनार्चयेतर्षीन्होमैर्देवान्यथाविधि ।  
 पितृच्छादनेन नृनञ्जैर्भूतानि बलिकर्मणा ॥<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 70, 73—75.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, iii, 80.

“The Ṛṣhis, the Piṭrs, the Devas, the Bhūtas and guests expect (help) from the householders: hence he who knows should give to them.

“Let him worship, according to the rule, the Ṛṣhis with Veda study, the Devas with Homa, the Piṭrs with Shrāddha, men with food, and the Bhūtas with Bali.”

We have here very plainly indicated the nature of the sacrifices to be offered; the sacrifice to Brahman, called also that of the Vedas and the Ṛṣhis, is study and teaching: this is a duty every man owes to the Supreme--to cultivate his intelligence and to share his knowledge with others. Every day the Āryan should devote a portion of time to study; the man who lives without daily study becomes frivolous and useless. This duty is enjoined by the first of the great sacrifices.

Then comes the sacrifice to the Devas--the recognition of the debt due to those who guide nature, and the “feeding” them by pouring ghee into the fire, the Homa sacrifice. The Devas are nourished by exhalations as men by food, their subtle bodies needing no coarser sustenance.

The sacrifice to the Piṭrs follows, consisting of the offerings of cakes and water. The Piṭrs are the sons of Marīchi and the Ṛṣhis produced by Manu, and are of many classes, the progenitors of the various divine and human races. From the Somasaḍ Piṭrs the Sādhyas and pure Brāhmaṇas are descended, and from the Agniṣhvāṭṭa Piṭrs the Devas and also some Brāhmaṇas. The Daityas, Dānavas, Yakṣhas,

Gandharvas, Uragas, Rākṣhasas, Suparṇas and Kin-  
 naras descend from the Barhiṣhad Piṭrs, as do also some  
 Brāhmaṇas. The Piṭrs of Kṣhattriyas are the Havir-  
 bhuks, of Vaishyas the Ājyapas, of Shūdras the  
 Sukālins. Countless descendants become associated  
 with them, so that the sacrifice may be said to be to  
 ancestors. In this a man is taught to remember the  
 immense debt he owes the past, and to regard  
 with loving gratitude those whose labours have be-  
 queathed to him the accumulated store of wealth,  
 learning and civilisation. He is reminded also of the  
 time when he will pass into the great ancestral host,  
 and of his duty to hand down to posterity the legacy  
 he has received, enriched, not diminished, by his life.  
 The full meaning of descent from Piṭrs is ascertain-  
 able only by study of occult science.

The sacrifice to Bhūtas consists of Bali, or offer-  
 ings of food placed on the ground in all directions,  
 intended for various beings of the invisible worlds,  
 and also for stray animals of all kinds and wandering  
 outcasts and diseased persons. The injunction as to  
 this should be remembered :

शुनां च पतितानां च श्वपचां पापरोगिणाम् ।

वायसानां कृमीणां च शनकैर्निर्वपेद्भुवि ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Let him gently place on the ground (food) for  
 dogs, outcastes, Shva-pachas, those diseased from sins,  
 crows and insects.”

It is not to be thrown down carelessly and con-  
 temptuously, but, put there gently, so that it may not

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, iii, 92.

be soiled or injured. It is a sacrifice, to be reverently performed, the recognition of duty, to inferiors, however degraded.

Lastly comes the sacrifice to men, the feeding of guests—or generally of the poor—the giving of food to the houseless and the student :

कृत्वैतद्वलिकर्मैवमतिथिं पूर्वमाशयेत् ।

भिक्षां च भिक्षुने दद्याद्विधिवद्ब्रह्मचारिणे ॥<sup>1</sup>

“The Bali offering made, let him feed first the guest, and let him give food, according to rule, to a beggar and a student.”

In this man is taught his duty to his brother-men, his duty of brotherly help and kindness. He feeds humanity in feeding some of its poorer members, and learns tenderness and compassion. The giving of food is illustrative of all supply of human needs. Manuṣhya-yajña includes *all* philanthropic actions. As in the old days, want of food was the chief want of man, that is mentioned prominently. The complexities of life have given rise to other wants now. But they are all included in the Manuṣhya-yajña, provided they are legitimate wants, and it becomes the duty of each man to remove them, so far as lies in his power.

Thus these five great sacrifices embrace man's duty to all the beings round him ; and the man who truly performs them in spirit as well as in letter, day by day, is doing his share in turning the wheel of life

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 94.

and is preparing for himself a happy future. We may glance briefly at the other sacrifices.

The Pāka-yajñas are seven in number :

- |                   |                    |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. पितृश्राद्धं . | Pitṛ-shrāddham.    |
| 2. पार्वणश्राद्धं | Pārvana-shrāddham. |
| 3. अष्टका         | Ashtakā.           |
| 4. श्रावणी        | Shrāvaṇī           |
| 5. अश्वयुजिः      | Ashvayujīḥ.        |
| 6. आग्रहायणी      | Āgrahāyaṇī.        |
| 7. चैत्री         | Chaitrī.           |

The first two of these are ceremonies in honour of the Pitṛs, and have been dealt with in Chapter II under Shrāddha. The remainder, except the fourth, are now rarely met with.

The fourteen Śrauta sacrifices are as follows :

The seven Haviryajñas :

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1. अग्न्याधेयं   | Agnyādheyam.           |
| 2. अग्निहोत्रं   | Agnihoṭram.            |
| 3. दर्शपूर्णमासं | Darsha-pūrṇamāsam.     |
| 4. आग्रयणं       | Āgrayanam.             |
| 5. चातुर्मास्यं  | Chāturmāsyaṁ.          |
| 6. निरूढपशुबन्धः | Nirūḍha-pashu-bandhaḥ. |
| 7. सौत्रामाणिः   | Sautrāmāṇiḥ.           |

In these milk, ghee, grains of various kinds, and cakes were offered, and Manu says that a Brāhmana should daily offer the Agnihoṭra in the morning and evening, the Darsha and Pūrṇamāsa at the end

of each fortnight, the Āgrayana with new grain—before which the new grain should not be used—the Chāturmāsya at the end of the three seasons, the Nirūdha-pashu-bandha at the solstices.<sup>1</sup>

The seven Somayajñas are :

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. अग्निष्टोमः    | Āgniṣhtomaḥ.    |
| 2. अत्यग्निष्टोमः | Atyagniṣhtomaḥ. |
| 3. उक्थ्यः        | Ukṭhyaḥ.        |
| 4. षोडशी          | Ṣoḍaśī          |
| 5. वाजपेयः        | Vājapeyaḥ.      |
| 6. अतिरात्रः      | Atirātraḥ.      |
| 7. आप्तोर्यामः    | Āptoryāmaḥ.     |

In these sacrifices Brāhmaṇa priests must be employed, the number varying with the sacrifice, the man on whose behalf they are offered being called the यजमानः, Yajamānaḥ ; the husband and wife light the three sacred fires—the Ahavaniya fire on the east, for offerings to the Devas ; the Dakṣhiṇa fire on the south, for performing the duties to the Piṭṛs ; the Gārhapatya fire on the west ; sometimes a fourth is mentioned, the Anvāhārya—and these are not allowed to go out ; this is the Agnyādhāna ceremony. All the Śrauta sacrifices are offered in these.

According to some authors, the domestic or household—the Āvastaṭhya or Vaivāhika—fire is lighted by the student on his return home when his pupilage is completed, but on this point there are

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iv, 25, 26.

many varieties of custom. The Pāka-yajñas are offered in the household fire.

A description of the daily life of a Brāhmaṇa is given in the *Ahnika-Sūtrāvalī*,<sup>1</sup> and may be summarised as follows :

He should wake up in the Brāhma-muhūrta<sup>2</sup> and think of Dharma and Artha, of the evils of the body, and of the Vedas. At the dawn he should rise, follow the Shaucha rules, and take his bath, then performing Sandhyā. Then he should perform the Agnihoṭra, and worship the Devas and the Gurus (teacher and parents). After this he should study the Vedas and Vedāṅgas. Then he should work for those dependent on him—parents, guru, wife, children, relatives, friends, the aged, infirm and friendless poor, and those who have no means. Then he should bathe, perform the midday Sandhyā, feed the Piṭṛs, Devas, men and animals, and take his own meal. After this he should read Purāṇas, Itihāsa, and Dharmashāstras, avoiding idle talk and discussion. Then he should go out, visit temples and friends, returning to his evening Sandhyā and Agnihoṭra. After this he should eat, attend to any family duties, and finally, after a brief reading of the Vedas, retire to bed. Any special duty should be attended to when it presents itself; as to these no rule can be laid down.

- The general principle of this is that a man's life should be orderly, regulated, and balanced, due time

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Paṇḍit Vaidyanārāyaṇa Vitthala.

<sup>2</sup> There are thirty Muhūrtas in 24 hours, a Muhūrta being 48 minutes. The Brāhma-muhūrta is the third Muhūrta of the last quarter of the night.

being given to each part of his duty so that none should be slighted or omitted, and none allowed to monopolise his time. Above all he should realise the idea that man has no separate individual existence, but is indissolubly linked with the universe, and his whole life must be a life of sacrifice and duties, if he is to fulfil the very law of his being. Such deliberate regulation of life is wise—necessary, even, if the most is to be made of life—and conduces to peacefulness and absence of hurry. In modern life the details cannot be carried out but the general principle of regularity, balance and a sustained spirit of self-sacrifice and duty should be maintained, so that all-round and harmonious progress may be made

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## CHAPTER V

### WORSHIP

WE have already seen that the work of the Devas was recognised and duly honoured among the Āryans, and that the duty of sacrificing for their support was regularly performed. But the truly religious man's relations with the invisible Powers are not confined to these regular and formal sacrifices. Īshvara Himself, the Supreme Lord, will attract the heart of the thoughtful and pious man, who sees, beyond these many ministers, the King Himself, the ruling Power of His universe, the life and support of Devas and men alike. It is towards Him that love and devotion naturally rise—the human spirit, who is His offspring, a fragment of Himself, seeking to rise and unite himself to his Parent. These feelings cannot find satisfaction in sacrifices offered to Devas, connected as they are with the outer worlds, with the Not-Self; they seek after the inner, the deepest, the very Self, and remain craving and unsatisfied until they rest in Him.

Worship is the expression of this craving of the part for the whole, of the separate for the One, and is not only due from man to the source of his life, but

is a necessary stage in the evolution of all those higher qualities in the Jīvātmā which make possible his liberation and his union with the Supreme. An Object of worship is therefore necessary to man.

That Object will always be, to the worshipper, the Supreme Being. He will know intellectually that the Object of his worship is a Form of manifestation of the Supreme, but emotionally that Form is the Supreme—as in truth it is, although the Supreme includes and transcends all forms.

Now a Form is necessary for worship. The Nirguṇa Brahman, the Absolute, the All, cannot be an Object of worship. It is not an Object, but is beyond all Subject and Object, including all, inseparate. But from THAT

**वाचो निवर्तन्त अप्राप्य मनसा सह ॥<sup>1</sup>**

“Words return with the mind, not having reached.”

Words fall into silence, mind disappears, It is all in all.

The Saguṇa Brahman may be the Object of worship for those whose minds are of a metaphysical nature, and who find rest and peace in the contemplation of Brahman in His own nature as Sat-Chit-Ānanda, the Universal Self, the One, the Supreme. Such contemplation is worship of a lofty kind, and is peculiarly congenial to philosophic minds, who find in it the sense of peace, rest, unity, which they cannot feel in any more limited conception. But to most it is easier to rise to Him through His manifestation as

<sup>1</sup> *Taittirīyopanishad*, II, iv, 1.

the Lord and Life of His worlds, or through one of the manifestations, as Mahādeva, Nārāyana, or more concrete yet, Śhrī Rāma or Śhrī Kṛṣṇa, or other embodiment. These arouse in them the Bhakti, the love and devotion, which the other conception fails to stir, and all the tendrils of the human heart wind themselves round such an image, and lift the heart into Ānanda, into bliss unspeakable.

Whether one of these two ways is the better is an oft-disputed question, and the answerers on either side are apt to be impatient with those on the other, intolerant of the uncongenial way. But the answer has been given with perfect wisdom and all-embracing comprehension by Śhrī Kṛṣṇa Himself. Arjuna was troubled by the question five thousand years ago, and put it to his divine Teacher :

एवं सततयुक्ता ये भक्तास्त्वां पर्युपासते ।  
ये चाप्यक्षरमव्यक्तं तेषां के योगवित्तमाः ॥

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।  
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥  
ये त्वक्षरमनिर्देश्यमव्यक्तं पर्युपासते ।  
सर्वत्रगमचिन्त्यं च कूटस्थमचलं ध्रुवम् ॥  
संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं सर्वत्र समबुद्धयः ।  
ते प्राप्नुवन्ति मामेव सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥  
क्लेशोऽधिकतरस्तेषामव्यक्तासक्तचेतसाम् ।  
अव्यक्ता हि गतिर्दुःखं देहवद्भिरवाप्यते ॥

ये तु सर्वाणि कर्माणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्पराः ।  
 अन्न्येनैव योगेन मां ध्यायन्त उपासते ॥  
 तेषामहं ससुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसारसागरात् ।  
 भवामि न चिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Those Bhaktas, who, ever controlled, worship Thee, and those also (who worship) the Indestructible, the Unmanifested, of these which are the more skilled in Yoga ?”

The Blessed Lord said :

“They who with Manas fixed on Me, ever controlled, worship Me, with faith supreme endowed, these I hold as best in Yoga.

“They who worship the Indestructible, the Ineffable, the Unmanifested, the Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the Unchangeable, the Immutable, the Eternal.

“Renouncing and subduing the senses, everywhere equal-minded, in the welfare of all creatures rejoicing, these also come unto Me.

“Greater is the difficulty of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifested, for the path of the Unmanifested is hard for the embodied to reach.

“Those verily who, renouncing all actions in Me and intent on Me, worship, meditating on Me with whole-hearted Yoga,

“These I speedily lift up from the ocean of death and existence, O Pārtha, their minds being fixed on Me.”

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā*, xii, 1—7.

This is the final answer; both achieve, both gain Mukṭi, but the worship of Īshvara in a Form is easier than the worship of Him without a Form, and escape from the cycle of rebirth is easier for those who thus worship.

The simplest form of worship is that generally spoken of as Pūjā, in which an image representing some divine Form is used as the Object, and the Being thus represented is adored; flowers are used, as beautiful symbols of the heart-flowers of love and reverence; water is sanctified with a manṭra, poured on the image, and sprinkled over the worshipper; a manṭra, in which the name of the Object of worship occurs, is repeated inaudibly a certain number of times, and the invisible bodies are thus rendered receptive of His influence, as before explained (see p. 4). Then the worshipper passes on according to his nature into spontaneous praise or prayer, aspiration and meditation, and becoming oblivious of the external object, rising to the One imaged in that object, and often feeling His presence, becomes suffused with peace and bliss. Such worship steadies the mind, purifies and ennobles the emotions, and stimulates the unfolding of the germinal spiritual faculties.

The use of an image in such worship is often found most helpful, and is wellnigh universal. It gives an object to which the mind can at first be directed and thus steadiness is obtained. If it be well chosen, it will attract the emotions, and the symbols, always present in such an image, will direct the mind to the characteristic properties of the Object of worship.

· Thus the Liṅgam is the symbol of the great Pillar of Fire, which is the most characteristic manifestation of Mahādeva, the destroying element which consumes all dross but only purifies the gold. The four-armed Viṣṇu represents the protecting support of the deity, whose arms uphold and protect the four quarters, and the objects held in the hands are symbols of His creative, ruling, destroying, forces, and of the universe He governs. The Sālagrāma is used in the household as the symbol of Viṣṇu. But all these are already familiar.

When the worshipper passes from the external worship to the internal, the image is reproduced mentally and carries him on into the invisible world, where it may change into a living Form, animated by the One it represents. Further, a properly prepared image—sanctified by mantras and by the daily renewed forces of the worshipper's devotion—becomes a strong magnetic centre from which issue powerful vibrations, which regularise and steady the invisible bodies of the worshipper, and thus assist him in gaining the quiet and peaceful conditions necessary for effective prayer and meditation.

Apart from these definite uses, the Bhakta feels a pleasure in contemplating such an image, similar in kind to, but greater in degree than, any one finds in having with him the picture of a beloved but absent friend.

· For all these reasons, no one should object to the use of images in religious worship by those who find them helpful; nor should any one try to force their

use on those who are not helped by them. Tolerance in these matters is the mark of the truly religious man.

The special Form to which Pūjā is addressed is sometimes the Kula-*deva*, or Kula-*devī*, the family *Deva* or *Devī*, and sometimes is the one chosen for the worshipper by his Guru, or chosen by himself as the one which most appeals to him. This Form is the *Iṣṭa-deva*, the *Deva* sacrificed to, or desired.

Other forms of worship are generally classed under the name *Upāsana*. Flowers are not employed, nor is an image necessary, though it is often used, for the reasons already given. The daily *Saṁdhyā* is a form of such worship in which all students should be properly instructed. It is of two types, *Vaidika* and *Tāntrika*, and varies according to caste and family customs. The complicated *Saṁdhyā* ceremony as performed nowadays in various parts of India does not exactly represent the oldest form of it, as taught in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*, and the early *Smṛtis*. But the *Arghya-pradāna* to the Sun and the meditation on and recitation of the *Gāyatrī*, which form the heart of the ceremony, are the oldest parts of it too. Unless it is performed at the proper *saṁdhyās* it cannot be of much profit to the performer. A *saṁdhyā* is the meeting point of two periods of time, great or small, or of two different states of one and the same subject. It is the teaching of the ancient *Rṣhis* of India that at *saṁdhyās* there is always a special manifestation of force which vanishes when the *saṁdhyā* is past.

• The broad features are :

1. Āchamana and Mārjana, purifying the body with water sanctified by a Mantra.

2. Prāṇāyāma, control of the breath.

3. Agha-marṣhaṇa, expiatory of all sins to which the Ego, not the Personality, is attached ; the worshipper goes back in mind to the time when there was no manifestation and no sins.

4. Gāyatrī, either Vaidika or Tāntrika, followed by

5. Worship of the Sun-God— Arghya and Upas-  
ṭhāna.

6. Japa, recitation, a certain number of times, of the Mantra of the Iṣhta-deva, including adoration and salutation.

The Vaidika sacrifices and saṃskāras are mostly out of use, but this Sandhyavandana is a living thing, the last remnant, and the student must jealously keep to it and must perform it every day.

Another kind of Upāsana is meditation, and the treatise of Patañjali, the *Pāṭaṅjali-sūtrāṇi*, should here be carefully studied, when the time for systematic meditation arrives. In student days the due performance of Sandhyā and of some form of Pūjā may suffice, but the theoretical outline of the practice of meditation may be given. Says Patañjali :

यमनियमासनप्राणायामप्रत्याहारधारणा-  
ध्यानसमाधयोऽष्टावङ्गानि ।<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *op., cit.*, ii, 29.



“Yama, Niyama, Āsana, Prāṇāyāma, Pratyāhāra, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, Samādhi—the eight limbs.”

The first two of these, Yama and Niyama, have to do with conduct, for without good conduct and purity there can be no meditation.

तत्राहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्याऽपरिग्रहा यमाः ।<sup>1</sup>

“Harmlessness, truth, honesty, chastity, absence of greed—(these are) Yamas.”

शौचसंतोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ।<sup>2</sup>

“Purity, contentment, austerity, Veda-study, yearning after Īshvara—(these are) Niyamas.”

These qualities acquired, a man may sit for meditation. There are two preliminaries. Any posture which is steady and pleasant is suitable :

स्थिरसुखमासनम् ।<sup>3</sup>

“Firm, pleasant—(that is) Āsana.”

Prāṇāyāma is the regulation of the breath, and this has to be learned from a teacher.

Then comes the immediate preparation, the closing of the senses against external objects, and the drawing of them and placing them in the mind : this is Pratyāhāra.

Now follows meditation proper, consisting of three stages, Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna and Samādhi.

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, 80.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 32.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 46.

### देशबन्धश्चित्तस्य धारणा ।<sup>1</sup>

“The binding of the mind to (one) object is Dhāraṇā.”

This is concentration, the steadying of the mind on one point, in one place, so that it is fixed, one-pointed. Only such a mind can pass on to Dhyāna.

### तत्र प्रत्ययैकतानता ध्यानम् ।<sup>2</sup>

“The steady (and uninterrupted) flow of cognition towards that (object) is Dhyāna.”

When this is reached, the mind, fixing itself thus, loses the consciousness of itself and remains identified with the object of thought, and this state is Samādhi.

### तदेवार्थमात्रनिर्भासं स्वरूपशून्यमिव समाधिः ।<sup>3</sup>

“That same (Dhyāna) showing the object only, and devoid, as it were, of self-consciousness, (is) Samādhi.”

These are the preparations for and the stages of meditation. By this a man rises to knowledge; by this he loses himself in the divine Being he worships; by this he disengages himself from the bonds of action. Without meditation no truly spiritual life is possible.

Manu has declared, after describing the life of the Sannyāsi :

ध्यानिकं सर्वमेवैतद्यदेतदभिश्चितम् ।

न ह्यनध्यात्मवित्कश्चित्क्रियाफलमुपाश्रुते ॥

<sup>1</sup> *ibid.*, iii, 1.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 3.

“ All this that has here been declared depends on meditation ; for no one who does not know the Supreme Self can fully enjoy the fruit of rites.”

It is therefore a thing to be looked forward to and prepared for, and every student who desires the higher life should begin his preparation by practising Yama and Niyama.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOUR ĀSHRAMAS

THE student will have noticed the extremely systematic and orderly arrangement of life which characterises the Sanātana Dharma. It is in full keeping with this, that the whole life should be arranged on a definite system, designed to give opportunity for the development of the different sides of human activity and assigning to each period of life its due occupations and training. Life was regarded as a school in which the powers of the Jīvātmā were to be evolved, and it was well or ill spent according as this object was well or ill achieved.

The life was divided into four stages, or Āshramas : that of the ब्रह्मचारी, Brahmachārī, the student, bound to celibacy ; that of the गृहस्थः, Gr̥hasthaḥ, the householder ; that of the वानप्रस्थः, Vānaprasthaḥ the forest-dweller ; that of the संन्यासी, Sannyāsī, the ascetic, called also the यतिः, Yatiḥ, the controlled, or the endeavourer.

ब्रह्मचारी गृहस्थश्च वानप्रस्थो यतिस्तथा ।

एते गृहस्थप्रभवाश्चत्वारः प्रथगाश्रमाः ॥<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, vi, 87.

“The Student, the Householder, the Forest-dweller, the Ascetic—these, the four separate orders, spring from the Householder.”

A man should pass through these regularly, and not enter any prematurely. Only when each had been completed might he enter the next.

वेदानधीत्य वेदौ वा वेदं वाऽपि यथाक्रमम् ।  
अविप्लुतब्रह्मचर्यो गृहस्थाश्रममावसेत् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Having studied the Vedas, or two Vedas, or even one Veda, in due order, without breaking celibacy, let him dwell in the householder order.”

गृहस्थस्तु यदा पश्येद्वलीपलितमात्मनः ।  
अपत्यस्य तथापत्यं तदारण्यं समाश्रयेत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“When the householder sees wrinkles (in his skin) and whiteness (in his hair) and the son of his son, then let him retire to the forest.”

वनेषु तु विहृत्यैवं तृतीयं भागमायुषः ।  
चतुर्थमायुषो भागं त्यक्त्वा संगान्परिव्रजेत् ॥<sup>3</sup>

“Having passed the third portion of life in the forests, let him, having abandoned attachments, wander (as an ascetic) the fourth portion of life.”

This succession is regarded as so important for the due development of the Jīvātmā, and the proper ordering of society, that Manu says:

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, iii, 2.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, vi, 2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 33.

अनधीत्य द्विजो वेदाननुत्पाद्य तथा प्रजाम् ।  
अनिष्टा चैव यज्ञैश्च मोक्षमिच्छन्ब्रजत्तथः ॥<sup>1</sup>

“ A twice-born man who seeketh Mokṣha without having studied the Vedas, without having produced offspring, and without having offered sacrifices, goeth downwards. ”

The offering of sacrifices, we shall see, is the chief duty of the forest-dweller, and therefore indicates the Vānaprastha state.

In rare and exceptional cases a student was allowed to become a Sannyāsī, his debts to the world having been fully paid in a previous birth ; but these rare cases left the regular order unshaken. Strictly speaking, indeed, even he was not called a Sannyāsī, and did not receive the initiations of Sannyāsa, proper ; but was called a Bāla or Naiṣṭhika Brahmachārī, like Shuka and the Kumāra Rṣhis. The great multiplication of young Sannyāsīs found in modern days is directly contrary to the ancient rules, and causes much vice and trouble and impoverishment of the country.

We will now consider the Āshramas in order.

The student life began, as we have seen, with the Upanayana ceremony, the boy being then committed to the care of his teacher, with whom he lived while his pupilage continued. His life thereafter was simple and hardy, intended to make him strong and healthy, independent of all soft and luxurious living,

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, vi, 37.

abstemious and devoid of ostentation. He was to rise before sunrise and bathe and then perform Sandhyā during the morning twilight till the sun rose; if it rose while he was still sleeping, he had to fast during the day, performing Japa. Then he went out to beg for food which was placed at his teacher's disposal, and was to take the portion assigned to him cheerfully :

पूजयेदशनं नित्यमद्याच्चैतदकुत्सयन् ।  
 दृष्ट्वा हृष्येत्प्रसीदेच्च प्रतिनन्देच्च सर्वशः ॥  
 पूजितं ह्यशनं नित्यं बलमूर्जं च यच्छति ।  
 अपूजितं तु तद्भुक्तमुभयं नाशयेदिदम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Let him ever honour (his) food, and eat it without contempt; having seen it, let him be glad and pleased, and in every way welcome it.

“Food which is honoured ever gives strength and nerve-vigour; eaten unhonoured, it destroys both these.”

The day was to be spent in study and in the service of his teacher :

नादितो गुरुणा नित्यमप्रणोदित एव वा ।  
 कुर्यादध्ययने योगमाचार्यस्य हितेषु च ॥<sup>2</sup>

“Directed or not directed by his teacher, let him ever engage in study, and in doing benefits to his preceptor.”

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, ii, 54, 55.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, ii, 191.

At sunset he was again to worship till the stars appeared. Then the second meal was taken. Between these two meals he was generally not to eat, and he was enjoined to be temperate as to his food.

अनारोग्यमनायुष्यमस्वर्ग्यं स्वातिभोजनम् ।

अपुण्यं लोकविद्विष्टं तस्मात्तत्परिवर्जयेत् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Over-eating is against health, long life (the attainment of) heaven and merit, and is disapproved by the world; therefore let him avoid it.”

The rules laid down as to his general conduct show how frugality, simplicity and hardness were enforced, so that the youth might grow into a strong and vigorous man; it was the training of a nation of energetic, powerful, nobly-mannered and dignified men.

वर्जयेन्मधु मांसं च गन्धमाल्यं रसांस्त्रियः ।

शुक्तानि चैव सर्वाणि प्राणिनां चैव हिंसनम् ॥

अभ्यङ्गमञ्जनं चाक्ष्णोरुपानञ्छत्रधारणम् ।

कामं क्रोधं च लोभं च नर्तनं गीतवादनम् ॥

द्यूतं च जनवादं च परिवादं तथानृतम् ।

स्त्रीणां च प्रेक्षणालम्भमुपघातं परस्त्रियं च ॥

एकः शयीत सर्वत्र न रेतः स्कन्दयेत् क्वचित् ।

कामाद्वि स्कन्दयन् रेतो हिनस्ति व्रतमात्मनः ॥

स्वप्ने सिक्त्वा ब्रह्मचारी द्विजः शुक्रमकामतः ।

स्नात्वा कर्मचर्यित्वा त्रिः पुनर्मामित्यृचं जपेत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, vi, 57.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, ii, 177-181.



“Let him refrain from wine, meat, perfumes, garlands, tasty and savoury dishes, women, all acids, and from injury to sentient creatures.

“From unguents, collyrium to the eyes, the wearing of shoes and umbrellas, from lust, anger and greed, dancing, singing and playing on musical instruments.

“Dice-playing, gossip, slander and untruth, from staring at and touching women, and from striking others.

“Let him always sleep alone, and let him not waste his seed; he who from lust wastes his seed, destroys his vow (and its valuable fruits.)

“A twice-born Brahmachārī who loses seed in sleep without lust, having bathed and worshipped the sun, should repeat the ṛk, पुनर्मांस्, etc., three times.”

The student will see that all the injunctions of Manu above quoted apply perfectly to the present day, except the prohibition as to shoes and umbrellas. Changed social conditions make modifications necessary on this point, as well as on certain other matters not included in the quotation.

The great stress laid upon chastity and purity during youth is due to the fact that the vigour and strength of manhood, freedom from disease, healthy children, and long life, depend more on this one virtue of complete continence than on any other one thing, self-abuse being the most fertile breeder of disease and premature decay. The old legislators and teachers therefore made a vow of celibacy part of the obligation of the student, and the very name of the student, the Brahmachārī, has become

synonymous with one who is under a vow of celibacy. The injunction quoted above, to avoid dancing, singing, playing on musical instruments, dicing, gossip, staring at and touching women, has as aim to keep the lad out of the company and the amusements that might lead him into forgetfulness of his vow, and into temptations for its breach. The simple food, the hard work, the frugal living, all build up a robust body, and ipure it to hardships.

Over and over again Manu speaks on this :

इन्द्रियाणां विचरतां विषयेष्वपहारिषु ।

संयमे यत्नमातिष्ठेद्विद्वान्यन्तेव वाजिनाम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“ Let the wise man exercise assiduity in the restraint of the senses, wandering among alluring objects, as the driver (restrains) the horses.”

वशे कृत्वेन्द्रियग्रामं संयम्य च मनस्तथा ।

सर्वान्संसाधयेदर्थानक्षिण्वन्योगतस्तनुम् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“ Having brought into subjection all his senses, and also regulated his mind, he may accomplish all his objects by Yoga, without emaciating his body.”

The *Chhāndogyaopaniṣat* declares that Yajña, Iṣhta, the feeding of the poor, the dwelling in forests, are all summed up in Brahmacharya, and that the third heaven of Brahmā is only thus obtained.<sup>3</sup>

The practice of self-control and complete continence was rendered much more easy than it would otherwise

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, ii, 88.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, ii, 100.

<sup>3</sup> *loc. cit.*, VIII, iv, 3, and v, 1—4.

have been, by the care bestowed on the physical development and training of youth by physical exercises and manly games of all kinds. In the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, we read of the way in which the youths were practised in the use of weapons, in riding and driving, in sports and feats of skill. These physical exercises formed a definite part of their education, and contributed to the building up of a vigorous and healthy frame.

Having thus fulfilled, in study and strict chastity, the student period, the youth was to present his teacher with a gift, according to his ability, and return home to enter the household life.

Then, and then only, he was to take a wife, and the responsibilities of man's estate. After marriage, great temperance in sexual relations was enjoined, marital connexion being only permissible on any one of ten nights in a month (see *Manu*, iii, 45—49). Women were to be honoured and loved, else no welfare could attend the home:

पितृभिर्भ्रातृभिश्चैताः पतिभिर्देवरैस्तथा ।

पूज्या भूषयितव्याश्च बहुकल्याणमीप्सुभिः ॥

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।

यत्र तास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥

शोचन्ति जामयो यत्र विनश्यत्याशु तत्कुलम् ।

न शोचन्ति तु यत्रैता वर्धते तद्धि सर्वदा ॥<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 55—57.

“They must be honoured and adorned by fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law, desiring welfare.

“Where women are honoured, there verily the Devas rejoice; where they are not honoured, there indeed all rites are fruitless.”

“Where the female relatives grieve, there the family quickly perishes; where they do not grieve, that family always prospers.”

संतुष्टी भार्यया भर्ता भर्त्रा भार्या तथैव च ।

यस्मिन्नेव कुले नित्यं कल्याणं तत्र वै ध्रुवम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“In the family in which the husband is contented with his wife, and the wife, with the husband, there happiness is ever sure.”

The Gr̥hast̥ha is the very heart of Āryan life; everything depends on him.

यथा वायुं समाश्रित्य सर्वे जीवन्ति जन्तवः ।

तथा गृहस्थमाश्रित्य वर्तन्त इतराश्रमाः ॥<sup>2</sup>

“As all creatures live supported by air, so the other orders exist supported by the householder.”

सर्वेषामपि चैतेषाम् वेदश्रुतिविधानतः ।

गृहस्थ उच्यते श्रेष्ठः स त्रीनेतान्बिभर्ति हि ॥

यथा नदीनदाः सर्वे सागरे यान्ति संस्थितिम् ।

तथैवाश्रमिणः सर्वे गृहस्थे यान्ति संस्थितिम् ॥<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, iii, 60.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 77.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, 89—90.

“Of all these, by the precepts of the Veda-Shruti, the householder is called the best; he verily supports the other three.”

“As all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the Āshramas flow to rest in the householder.”

Hence the householder is the best of the orders, ज्येष्ठाश्रमो गृही. He has the duty of accumulating wealth—in this the Vaishya is the typical householder—and of distributing it rightly. Hospitality is one of his chief duties, and in this he must never fail.

गृणानि भूमिरुदकं वाक्चतुर्थी च सूनुता ।  
एतान्यपि सतां गेहे नोच्छिद्यन्ते कदाचन ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Grasses, earth, water, the kind word, these four are never lacking in the houses of the good.”

He must ever feed first his guests, Brāhmaṇas, his relatives and his servants, and then he and his wife should eat, but even before these he should serve brides, infants, the sick, and pregnant women.<sup>2</sup>

The householder must duly offer the five great sacrifices, and by Brāhmaṇa householders the duty of the monthly Shrāddhas should be observed.<sup>3</sup> The Brāhmaṇa should maintain his studies, and not follow occupations which prevent study, but earn his living in some business that does not injure others.<sup>4</sup> Careful rules are laid down for conduct that belong to the general

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, iii, 101.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 114—116.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, iv, 17.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

conduct of life, the householder being the typical human being. His special virtues are hospitality, industry, truth, honesty, liberality, charity, purity of food and life. He may enjoy wealth and luxury, provided he give alms.

The householder may quit the household life, and become a Vānaprastha, going to the forest when, as before said, he is growing old and has grandchildren. His wife may go with him, or remain with her sons, and he goes forth, taking with him the sacred fire and sacrificial instruments. His duty to the world is now to help it by prayer and sacrifice, and he is accordingly to continue to offer the five daily sacrifices, together with the Agnihotra, the new- and full-moon sacrifices and others. The rule of his life is to be sacrifice, study, austerity, and kindness to all:

स्वाध्याये नित्ययुक्तः स्याद्दान्तो मैत्रः समाहितः ।

दाता नित्यमनादाता सर्वभूतानुकम्पकः ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Let him ever be engaged in Veda study, controlled, friendly, collected ; ever a giver, not a receiver, compassionate to all beings.”

This simple ascetic life leads him on to the last stage, that of the Sannyāsī, the man who has renounced all. He no longer offers sacrifices, having given all his property away ; he lives alone, with tree for shelter, his life given to meditation.

अनग्निरनिकेतः स्याद्द्राममन्नार्थमाश्रयेत् ।

उपेक्षकोऽसंकुसुको मुनिर्भावसमाहितः ॥<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, vi, 8.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 43.

“Let him be without fire, without dwelling, let him go to a village for food, indifferent, firm of purpose, a muni of collected mind.”

Then follows a beautiful description of the true Sannyāsi.

नाभिनन्देत् मरणं नाभिनन्देत् जीवितम् ।  
 कालमेव प्रतीक्षेत् निर्देशं भृतको यथा ॥  
 दृष्टिपूतं न्यसेत्पादं वस्त्रपूतं जलं पिबेत् ।  
 सत्यपूतं वदेद्वाचं मनःपूतं समाचरेत् ॥  
 अतिवादांस्तितिक्षेत् नावमन्येत कंचन ।  
 न चेमं देहमाश्रित्य वैरं कुर्वीत केनचित् ॥  
 क्रुध्यन्तं न प्रतिकुध्येदाकुष्ठः कुशलं वदेत् ।  
 सप्तद्वारावकीर्णां च न वाचमनृतां वदेत् ॥  
 अध्यात्मरतिरासीनो निरपेक्षो निरामिषः ।  
 आत्मनैव सहायेन सुखार्थी विचरेदिह ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Let him not wish for death, let him not wish for life, let him wait for the time, as a servant for his wages.

“Let him set feet purified (guided) by sight, let him drink water purified by (strained through) a cloth, let him speak words purified by truth, let him do acts purified (governed) by reason.

“Let him endure harsh language, and let him not insult any one; nor, relying on this (perishable) body, let him make an enemy of any one.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, vi, 45—49.

“Let him not return anger to the angry, let him bless when cursed ; let him not utter lying speech, scattered at the seven gates (*i. e.*, speech showing desire for the fleeting and false objects of the five outer senses and Manas and Buddhi).

“Rejoicing in the Supreme Self, sitting indifferent, refraining from sensual delights, with himself for his only friend, let him wander here (on the earth), aiming at liberation.”

He is to meditate constantly on transmigration and suffering, on the Supreme Self and Its presence in high and low alike, to trace the Jīvātman through its many births, and to rest in Brahman alone. Thus doing, he reaches Brahman.

Such were the four Āshramas of Sanātana Dharma, designed for the training of man to the highest ends. In modern days they cannot be completely revived in their letter, but they might be revived in their spirit, to the great improvement of modern life. The student period must now be passed in school and college, for the most part, instead of in the Āshrama of the Guru ; but the same principles of frugal, hardy, simple living might be carried out, and Brahmacharya might be universally enforced. The Grhastha ideal, commenced at marriage, might be very largely followed in its sense of duty and responsibility, in its discharge of religious obligations, in its balanced ordering of life, in its recognition of all claims, of all debts. The third Āshrama could not be lived in the forest by many, and the fourth Āshrama is beyond the reach of most in these



days ; but the idea of the gradual withdrawal from worldly life, of the surrender of the conduct of business into the hands of the younger generation, of the making of meditation, study and worship the main duties of life—all this could be carried out. And the presence of such aged and saintly men would sanctify the whole community, and would serve as a constant reminder of the dignity and reality of the religious life, setting up a noble ideal, and raising, by their example, the level of the whole society.

A life which is well-ordered from beginning to end—that is what is implied in the phrase “The four Āshramas”. Two of them—namely that of the student and that of the householder—may be said to represent in the life of an individual that outward-going energy which carries the Jīva into the Pravṛtti Mārga. The two latter stages—the life of the Vānaprastha and that of the Saṁnyāsi—these are the stages of withdrawal from the world, and may be said to represent the Nivṛtti Mārga in the life of the individual. So wisely did the ancient ones mark out the road along which a man should tread, that any man who takes this plan of life, divided into four stages, will find his outgoing and indrawing energies rightly balanced. First, the student stage, properly lived and worthily carried out ; then the householder stage, with all its busy activity in every direction of worldly business ; then the gradual withdrawal from activity, the turning inward, the life of comparative seclusion, of prayer and of meditation, of the giving of wise counsel to the younger generation engaged in worldly

activities; and then, for some at least, the life of complete renunciation.

It must not be forgotten that the passing through these Āshramas and the reaching of liberation has for its object—as we may see from the stories of Mukṣas in the Purāṇas and Itihāsas—the helping on of the worlds, and the co-operating with Īshvara in His benevolent administration, and His guidance of evolution. In the outward life of Sannyāsa the Jīvātmā learns detachment and indifference, but the highest Sannyāsa is that of the inner, not that of the outer life, in which a man, who is completely detached and indifferent, mingles in the life of men for their helping and uplifting.

अनाश्रितः कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः ।

स संन्यासी च योगी च न निरभिर्नचाक्रियः ॥<sup>1</sup>

“He who performeth such action as is duty, independently of the fruit of action, he is a Sannyāsī and Yogī also, not he that is without fire and rites.”

Such a man lives in the midst of objects of attachment and is yet without attachment, regarding nothing as his own though possessed of wealth. He then becomes the ideal householder, whom the Grhas-tha reflects, and verifies in its fullest sense the dictum of Manu, that the householder order is the highest of all because it is the support of all. And the household life is truly lived only where a man sets before himself that high ideal of administrator rather than owner, servant rather than master of all.

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā*, iv, i.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE FOUR CASTES

Just as the Four Āshramas serve as a school for the unfolding of the Jīvātman during a single life, so do the Four Castes serve as a similar school for its unfolding during a part of the whole period of its transmigrations. Looked at in the broadest sense, they represent the complete period, but, as an external system, the Jīvātman is in them only for a portion of his pilgrimage. The present confusion of castes has largely neutralised the use they once served. In the ancient days the Jīvātman was prepared for entrance into each caste through a long preliminary stage outside India ; then he was born into India and passed into each caste to receive its definite lessons ; then was born away from India to practise these lessons ; usually returning to India, to the highest of them, in the final stages of his evolution.

It is necessary to see the great principles underlying the Caste System in order to estimate its advantages at their proper value ; and also in order to distinguish rightly between these fundamental principles and the numerous non-essential, and in many cases

mischievous, accretions which have grown up around it, and have become interwoven with it, in the course of ages.

The first thing to understand is that the evolution of the Jīvātmā is divided into four great stages, and that this is true of every Jīvātmā, and is in no sense peculiar to those who, in their outer coverings, are Āryans and Hindūs. Jīvātmās pass into and out of the Hindū Religion, but every Jīvātmā is in one or other of the four great stages. These belong to no age and to no civilisation, to no race and no nation. They are universal, of all times and of all races.

The first stage is that which embraces the infancy, childhood and youth of the Jīvātmā, during which he is in a state of pupilage, fit only for service and study, and has scarcely any responsibilities.

The second stage is the first half of his manhood, during which he carries on the ordinary business of the world, bears the burden of household responsibilities, so to say, the accumulation, enjoyment and proper disposal of wealth, together with the heavy duties of organising, training and educating his youngers in all the duties of life.

The third stage occupies the second half of his manhood, during which he bears the burden of national responsibilities, the duty of protecting, guiding, ruling others, and utterly subordinating his individual interests to the common good, even to the willing sacrifice of his own life for the lives around him.

The fourth stage is the old age of the Jīvātmā, when his accumulated experiences have taught him to

see clearly the valuelessness of all earth's treasures, and have made him rich in wisdom and compassion, the selfless friend of all, the teacher and counsellor of all his youngers.

These stages are, as said above, universal. The peculiarity of the Sānātana Dharma is that these four universal stages have been made the foundation of a social polity, and have been represented by four definite external castes, or classes, the characteristics laid down as belonging to each caste being those which characterise the stage of the universal evolution to which the caste corresponds.

The first stage is represented by the Shūdra caste, in which, as we shall see, the rules are few and the responsibilities light. Its one great duty is that of service; its virtues are those which should be evolved in the period of youth and pupilage—obedience, fidelity, reverence, industry and the like.

The second stage is represented by the Vaishya, the typical householder, on whom the social life of the nation depends. He comes under strict rules, designed to foster unselfishness and the sense of responsibility, to nourish detachment in the midst of possession, and to make him feel the nation as his household. His virtues are diligence, caution, prudence, discretion, charity, and the like.

The third stage is represented by the Kṣhātrīya, the ruler and warrior, on whom depends the national order and safety. He also lives under strict rules, intended to draw out all the energy and strength of his character and to turn them to unselfish ends, and

to make him feel that everything he possesses, even life itself, must be thrown away at the call of duty. His virtues are generosity, vigour, courage, strength, power to rule, self-control, and the like.

The fourth stage is represented by the Brāhmaṇa, the teacher and priest, who lives under the strictest of all rules directed to make him a centre of purifying influence, physically as well as morally and spiritually. He is to have outgrown the love of wealth and power, to be devoted to study, learned and wise. He is to be the refuge of all creatures, their sure help in time of need. His virtues are gentleness, patience, purity, self-sacrifice, and the like.

The Jīvātṃā who, in any nation, at any time, shows out these types of virtues, belongs to the stage of which his type is characteristic, and, if born in India as a Hindū, should be born into the corresponding caste. In this age one can only say "should be," as the castes are now confused and the types are but rarely found. These characteristic virtues form the "Dharma" of each caste, but these Dharmas are now, unhappily, disregarded.

It is easy to see that the broad dividing lines of classes everywhere follow these lines of caste. The manual labour class, the proletariat—to use the western term—should consist of Jīvātṃās in the Shūdra stage. The organisers of industry, the merchants, bankers, financiers, large agriculturists, traders, should be Jīvātṃās in the Vaishya stage. The legislators, warriors, the judicial and administrative services, the statesmen and rulers, should be Jīvātṃās who are in

the Kṣhattriya stage. And the teachers, *sarants*, clergy, the spiritual leaders, should be Jīvātmās in the Brāhmaṇa stage. There are Jīvātmās of the four types everywhere, and there are social offices of the four kinds everywhere; but now, in the Kali Yuga, the four types of Jīvātmās and the four departments of national life are mixed up in inextricable confusion, so that every nation presents a whirl of contending individuals, instead of an organised community moving in harmony in all its parts.

Another fundamental principle of caste was that as the Jīvātmā advanced, his external liberty, as seen above, became more and more circumscribed and his responsibilities heavier and heavier. The life of the Shūdra was easy and irresponsible, with few restrictions as to food, amusement, place of residence or form of livelihood. He could go anywhere and do anything. The Vaishya had to bear the heavy responsibilities of mercantile life, to support needful public institutions with unstinted charity, to devote himself to business with the utmost diligence; and he was required to study, to make sacrifices, to be pure in his diet, and disciplined in his life. The Kṣhattriya, while wielding power, was worked to the fullest extent, and his laborious life, when he was a monarch, would alarm even a diligent king of the present day; the property, the lives of all, were guarded by the warrior caste, and any man's grievance unredressed was held to dishonour the realm. Heaviest burden of all was laid on the Brāhmaṇa, whose physical life was austere and rigidly simple, who was bound by the

most minute rules to preserve his physical and magnetic purity, and whose time was spent in study and worship. Thus the responsibility increased with the superiority of the caste, and the individual was expected to subordinate himself more and more to the community. The rigid purity of the Brāhmaṇa was far less for his own sake than for that of the nation. He was the source of physical health by his scrupulous cleanliness, continually purifying all the particles of matter that entered his body, and sending forth a pure stream to build the bodies of others, for health and gladness are contagious and infectious, for the same reasons as disease and sorrow. The rules which bound him were not intended to subserve pride and exclusiveness, but to preserve him as a purifying force, physical as well as moral and mental. The whole purpose of the caste system is misconceived, when it is regarded as setting up barriers which intensify personal pride, instead of imposing rules on the higher classes, designed to forward the good of the whole community. As Manu said :

समानाद्राह्मणो नित्यमुद्विजेत विषादिव ।  
अमृतस्येव चाकाङ्क्षेदवमानस्य सर्वदा ॥<sup>1</sup>

“ Let the Brāhmaṇa flee from homage as from venom : let him ever desire indignity as nectar.”

Let us now study some of the statements made on this subject in the Shruṭi and Smṛti.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, ii, 162.



The general principle laid down above as to the universality of the four great stages and as to their being founded on natural divisions is enunciated by Shri Kṛṣṇa :

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः ।

तस्य कर्तारमपि मां विद्धि ..... ॥<sup>1</sup>

“The four castes were emanated by Me, by the different distribution of the energies (attributes) and actions ; know Me to be the author of them.”

This distribution it is which marks out the castes, and it is not, of course, confined to India. But in the land in which settled the first family of the Āryan stock, the Manu established a model polity or social order, showing in miniature the course of evolution, and into this were born Jivātṁs belonging to the different stages, who showed out the characteristics of the several castes, and thus formed a truly model state. This was “the golden age” of India, and the traditions of this still linger, the splendid background of her history.

When humanity is figured as a vast man or when the Īshvara is spoken of as emanating men, then we have the following graphic picture of the four castes :

ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुखमासीद्ब्राह्म राजन्यः कृतः ।

ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रो अजायत ॥<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā*, iv, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Rgveda*, X, xc, 12.

“The Brāhmaṇa was His mouth ; the Rājanya was made His two arms ; His two thighs the Vaishya ; the Shūdra was born from His two feet.”

The teacher is the mouth, and the ruling power the arms ; the merchants are the pillars of the nation, as the thighs of the body, while all rest on the manual worker. As we see the facts and necessities of social organisation, we cannot but recognise the inevitableness of the division, whether it be represented or not by a system of four castes.

The virtues that constitute the four castes are thus described by Shri Kṛṣṇa :

ब्राह्मणक्षत्रियविशां शूद्राणां च परंतप ।  
 कर्माणि प्रविभक्तानि स्वभावप्रभवैर्गुणैः ॥  
 शमो दमस्तपः शौचं क्षान्तिरार्जवमेव च ।  
 ज्ञानं विज्ञानमास्तिक्यं ब्रह्मकर्म स्वभावजम् ॥  
 शौर्यं तेजो धृतिर्दाक्ष्यं युद्धे चाप्यपलायनम् ।  
 दानमीश्वरभावश्च क्षात्रं कर्म स्वभावजम् ॥  
 कृषिगोरक्ष्यवाणिज्यं वैश्यकर्म स्वभावजम् ।  
 परिचर्यात्मकं कर्म शूद्रस्यापि स्वभावजम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“Of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣhattriyas, Vaishyas and Shūdras, O Parantapa ! the Karmas have been distributed according to the Guṇas born of their own natures.

“Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, and also uprightness, wisdom, knowledge,

<sup>1</sup> *Bhagavad-Gītā*, xviii, 41—44

belief in God, are the Brāhmaṇa-karma, born of his own nature.

“Prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, and also not fleeing in battle, generosity, rulership, are the Kṣhatriya-karma, born of his own nature.

“Agriculture, protection of kine, and commerce are the Vaishya-karma, born of his own nature. Action of the nature of service is the Shūdra-karma, born of his own nature.”

Thus clearly are outlined the Dharmas of the four castes, the qualities which should be developed in each of the four great stages of the pilgrimage of the Jīvātmā through Samsāra.

Manu explains the occupations of each caste very clearly :

सर्वस्यास्य तु सर्गस्य गुप्तयर्थं स महानृतिः ।

मुखबाहूरुपज्जानां पृथक्कर्माण्यकल्पयत् ॥

अध्यापनमध्ययनं यजनं याजनं तथा ।

दानं प्रतिग्रहं चैव ब्राह्मणानामकल्पयत् ॥

प्रजानां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च ।

विषयेष्वप्रसक्तिं च क्षत्रियस्य समादिशत् ॥

पशूनां रक्षणं दानमिज्याध्ययनमेव च ।

ऋणिकपथं कुसीदं च वैश्यस्य कृषिमेव च ॥

एकमेव तु शूद्रस्य प्रभुः कर्म समादिशत् ।

एतेषामेव वर्णानां शुश्रूषामनसूयया ॥<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, i, 87—91.

“He, the Resplendent, for the sake of protecting all this creation, assigned separate Karmas to those born of His mouth, arms, thighs and feet.

“Teaching and studying the Veda, sacrificing and also guiding others in offering sacrifices, gifts and receiving of gifts, these He assigned to the Brāhmaṇas.

“The protection of the people, gifts, sacrificing, and study of the Vedas, non-attachment amid the objects of the senses, these He prescribed to the Kṣhatṭriyas.

“The protection of cattle, gifts, sacrificing, and study of the Vedas, commerce, banking, and agriculture, to the Vaishyas.

“The Lord commanded one Karma only to the Shūdras, to serve ungrudgingly these castes.”

Thus the Brāhmaṇas alone might teach the Vedas, but the duty of studying them belonged equally to the three twice-born castes.

A man who did not show forth the Dharma of his caste was not regarded as belonging to it, according to the teachers of the ancient days. We have already seen that ignorant Brāhmaṇas were mere ashes, unfit for the discharge of their duties, and even more strongly Manu says :

यथा काष्ठमयो हस्ती यथा चर्ममयो मृगः ।

यश्च विप्रोऽनधीयानस्त्रयस्ते नामधारकाः ॥

योऽनधीत्य द्विजो वेदमन्यत्र कुरुते श्रमम् ।

स जीवन्नेव शूद्रत्वमाशु गच्छति सान्वयः ॥<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛiti*, ii, 157, 168.

“As a wooden elephant, as a leathern deer, such is an unlearned Brāhmaṇa; the three bear only names.

“The Brāhmaṇa who, not having studied the Vedas, labours elsewhere, becomes a Shūdra in that very life together with his descendants.”

And again :

‘शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतामेति ब्राह्मणश्चैव शूद्रताम् ।

क्षत्रियाज्जातमेवं तु विद्याद्वैश्यार्त्तथैव च ॥<sup>1</sup>

“The Shūdra becomes a Brāhmaṇa and a Brāhmaṇa a Shūdra (by conduct). Know this same (rule to apply) to him who is born of the Kṣhatṭriya or of the Vaishya.”

So also Yudhiṣṭhira taught the fundamental distinctions, without the existence of which caste becomes a mere name :

सत्यं दानं क्षमा शीलमानृशंस्यं तपो घृणा ।

दृश्यन्ते यत्र नागेन्द्र स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥

शूद्रे तु यद्भवेत्क्षयं द्विजे तच्च न विद्यते ।

नैव शूद्रो भवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥

यत्रैतल्लक्ष्यते सर्पं वृत्तं स ब्राह्मणः स्मृतः ।

यत्र नैतद्भवेत्सर्पं तं शूद्रमिति निर्दिशेत् ॥<sup>2</sup>

“Truth, gift, forgiveness, good conduct, gentleness, austerity, and mercy, where these are seen, O king of serpents, he is called a Brāhmaṇa.

<sup>1</sup> *Manusmṛti*, x, 65.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Vanaparva, clxxx, 21, 25, 26.

“ If these marks exist in a Shūdra and are not in a twice-born, the Shūdra is not a Shūdra, nor the Brāhmaṇa a Brāhmaṇa.

“ Where this conduct is shown, O serpent, he is called a Brāhmaṇa; where this is not, O serpent, he should be regarded as a Shūdra.”

In the *Viṣṇu-Bhāgavata* we read :

यस्य यलक्षणं प्रोक्तं पुंसो वर्णाभिव्यञ्जकम् ।  
यदन्यत्रापि दृश्येत तत्तेनैव विनिर्दिशेत् ॥<sup>1</sup>

“ What is said as to the marks of conduct indicative of a man's caste, if those marks are found in another, designate him by the caste of his marks (and not of his birth).”

Commenting on this Shrīdhara Svāmī says: “ Brāhmaṇas and others are to be chiefly recognised by Shama and other qualities, and not by their birth alone.”

जन्मना जायते शूद्रः संस्काराद्भिज उच्यते ।

“ By birth every one is a Shūdra. By Samskāra he becomes twice-born.”

So also we find that the preceptor Haridrumata of the Gauṭama goṭra, approached by Satyakāma, desirous of becoming his pupil, asked him his goṭra; the boy answered that his mother did not know his goṭra, for he was born when she was engaged in waiting on guests, and he could only go by her name; he

<sup>1</sup> *loc. cit.*, VII, xi, 35.

was therefore merely Saṭyakāma, the son of Jābāla. Haridrumata declared that an answer so truthful was the answer of a Brāhmaṇa, and he would therefore initiate him.<sup>1</sup>

Further it must be remembered :

आचारहीनं न पुनन्ति वेदाः ।<sup>2</sup>

“The Vedas do not purify him who is devoid of good conduct.”

Much question has arisen as to the possibility of a man passing from one caste to another during a single life. It is, of course, universally granted that a man raises himself from one caste to another by good conduct, but it is generally considered that the conduct bears fruit by birth into a higher caste in the succeeding life. The texts quoted in support of passage from one caste to another will mostly bear this interpretation, just as by degradation from one caste to another rebirth in a lower caste was generally meant. But there are cases on record of such passage during a single life. The history of Vishvāmitra, a Kṣhatṭriya, becoming a Brāhmaṇa is familiar to every one,<sup>3</sup> but equally familiar are the tremendous efforts he made ere he attained his object—a proof of the extreme difficulty of the change. Gārgya, the son of Shini, and Trayyāruṇi, Kavi and Puṣkarāruṇi, the sons of Duritākshaya, all Kṣhatṭriyas, became Brāhmaṇas, as

<sup>1</sup> *Chhāṇḍogyaopaniṣad*, IV, iv.

<sup>2</sup> *Vasiṣṭha-Smṛti*, vi, 3

<sup>3</sup> *Rāmāyaṇa*, Bālukaṇḍa, lvii—lxv.

did Mudgala, son of Bharmyāshva, also a Kṣhatṭriya.<sup>1</sup> Viṭahavya, a Kṣhatṭriya, was made a Brāhmaṇa by Bhṛgu, in whose Āshrama he had taken refuge.<sup>2</sup>

The truth probably is that changes of caste were made in the ancient days, but that they were rare, and that good conduct for the most part took effect in rebirth into a higher caste. Even the famous shloka :

न योनिर्नापि संस्कारो न श्रुतं न च संततिः ।  
कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव तु कारणं ॥<sup>3</sup>

“Not birth, nor Samskāras, nor study of the Vedas, nor ancestry, are causes of Brāhmaṇahood. Conduct alone is verily the cause thereof,” may apply as well to rebirth into a higher caste as to transference into it. In ancient days the immediate present was not as important as it is now, the continuing life of the Jīvātmā being far more vividly kept in mind, and the workings of kārmic law more readily acquiesced in. Nor were the divisions of castes then felt to be an injustice, as they now are when the Dharmas of the castes are neglected, and high caste is accompanied by a feeling of pride instead of by one of responsibility and service.

Innumerable subdivisions have arisen within the great castes, which have no foundation in nature and therefore no stability nor justification. By these much social friction is caused, and petty walls of division

<sup>1</sup> *Viṣṇu-Bhāgavata*, IX, xxi, 19, 20, 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Anushāsanaparva, cxx.

<sup>3</sup> *Mahābhārata*, Vanaparva, cccxiii, 108.



are set up, jealousies and rivalries taking the place of the ancient co-operation for the general good. The circles of intermarriage became too restricted, and local and unimportant customs become fossilised into religious obligations, making social life run in narrow grooves and cramping limitations, tending to provoke rebellion and exasperate feelings of irritation. Moreover, many of the customs regarded as most binding are purely local, customs being vital in the South which are unknown in the North, and *vice versa*. Hence Hindūs are split up into innumerable little bodies, each hedged in by a wall of its own, regarded as all-important. It is difficult, if not impossible, to create a national spirit from such inharmonious materials, and to induce those who are accustomed to such narrow horizons to take a broader view of life. While a man of one of the four castes, in the old days, felt himself to be an integral part of a nation, a man of a small sub-caste has no sense of organic life, and tends to be a sectarian rather than a patriot.

At the present time a man of any caste takes up any occupation, and makes no effort to cultivate the characteristic virtues of his caste. Hence the inner and the outer no longer accord, and there is jangle instead of harmony. No caste offers to incoming Jīvātman physical bodies and physical environments fitted for one caste more than for another, and the castes consequently no longer serve as stages for the evolving Jīvātman. Hence the great value of the Hindū system as a graduated school, into which Jīvātman could pass for definite training in each stage,

has wellnigh ceased, and the evolution of the human race is thereby delayed.

The caste system is one on which the student, when he goes out into the world, will find great difference of opinion among pious and highly educated men, and he will have to make up his own mind upon it, after careful study and deliberation. It is the system which Manu considered best for the fifth, or Āryan, race, the Pañchajanas, and in its early days ensured order, progress and general happiness, as no other system has done. It has fallen into decay under those most disintegrating forces in human society—pride, exclusiveness, selfishness, the evil brood of Ahankāra wedded to the personal self instead of to the Supreme Self.

Unless the abuses which are interwoven with it can be eliminated, its doom is certain; but equally certain is it, that if those abuses could be destroyed and the system itself maintained, Hindūism would solve some of the social problems which threaten to undermine western civilisation, and would set an example to the world of an ideal social state.



# THE NECESSITY FOR RE-INCARNATION.

BY  
ANNIE BESANT.

*Being the Lecture delivered under the auspices of the  
HAMPSTEAD LODGE of the THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,  
at which the REV. A. L. LILLEY (Vicar of S. Mary's,  
Paddington), was forbidden by the BISHOP OF LONDON  
to preside.*

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## THE NECESSITY FOR RE-INCARNATION.

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THE meeting was opened by Miss EDITH WARD in the absence of the Rev. A. L. Lilley. Miss WARD said:—

Ladies and Gentlemen:—To many of you in this Hall, my presence on this platform as Chairman of this meeting requires some explanation. Most of you have expected that the chair to-night would be taken by the Rev. A. L. Lilley, Vicar of St. Mary's, Paddington; but I have here in my hand a letter from Mr. Lilley, explaining the reason of his absence this evening. He writes to Mr. Sidney, who has been in correspondence with him, as follows:—

Dear Sir,—The Bishop of London has officially forbidden me, as a clergyman of his diocese, to take the chair at Mr. Besant's lecture on Wednesday. It is a disappointment to me to find myself thus unable to keep my promise to you. You, in generously asking me to preside, and I, in readily consenting to do so, had but one object in view. We found ourselves both believing in the religious nature of man as the key to the completeness and harmony of his life, and yet each expressing that belief in his different way. We wished, therefore, to demonstrate our belief in the essential unity of the religious spirit, and to evince an intelligent and sympathetic curiosity in the different forms through which we each give expression to it. As the psychological aspect of religious beliefs, what they mean in their working in actual human souls, is coming to be of greater importance than their formal aspect, what they affirm in the abstract, this mutual

intelligence will become more and more desirable, and even necessary. We shall not be satisfied till those who hold other religious beliefs than our own get near enough to us to learn what ours mean for us, till we get near enough to others to understand what their religious beliefs mean for them. The study of religion will, in the future, be much more a study of human souls, and of what I may call the souls of great religious societies, than that of formal theological propositions. Or rather it will be a study of religious beliefs in their living action upon and in human souls. A beginning of the religious amity, which is the necessary condition of such study, was made, ten years ago, by the Parliament of Religions at Chicago, in whose deliberations two distinguished representatives of the leading Church in Christendom took part. My own sense of the religious value of the hospitable mind, the distinguished precedent to which I have referred, and my memory of certain lectures of Mrs. Besant's, entitled "Esoteric Christianity," which revealed in a high degree the power of sympathetic interpretation of beliefs not formally held by her, were among the reasons which induced me to accede so readily to your request that I should take the chair at her lecture. I can only add my regret that I am prevented from doing so. And, above all, I regret that my judgment was at fault in thinking, as I did, that the time was ripe for such action without any serious danger of its being misunderstood.—Yours very truly,

A. L. LILLEY.

St. Mary's Vicarage, Paddington, *May 16th, 1904.*

I think it is hardly necessary for me to add anything except to express the ~~greatest~~ appreciation of the broad-minded toleration to which Mr. Lilley has given voice in that letter. I can only say that those views are the views of the Theosophical Society. I can only regret that Mr. Lilley is not able to be here to-night, to express further in his own words the views which he has there stated. We regret the action of the Bishop of London, not so much perhaps for our own disappointment here, as for the indication that it seems to give of something lacking, something to be lamented, not to be harshly criticised, but lamented, in a leading exponent of the Church of this country. That is what we can most heartily regret, while to most of us in this room it is a matter of knowledge that the action that has been taken

by the Bishop of London is due entirely to ignorance of what Mrs. Besant is likely to teach us from this platform. Mr. Lilley has referred in his letter to *Esoteric Christianity*. To any who know that book it must be clear that there is no opposition in the mind of the leading exponent of Theosophy, whom we have with us to-night, to the *real* doctrines of the Christian Church. Speaking for myself, and I know I am speaking the opinion of many in this hall as well, speaking for myself, I can only say that it is the teaching that Mrs. Besant has given expression to that has brought me into nearer sympathy with, and greater appreciation of, Christianity than I have had at any time in my life, not excepting the time when I was a member of the Christian Church; and I think that is the feeling of many who are here. The teaching that we are to listen to to-night, on the "Necessity for Re-incarnation," if it does one thing more than another, gives us a wider tolerance, a tolerance from which we can regard, without the least anger or ill-feeling, the apparent slight the Bishop of London seems to have put upon our lecturer this evening. We know, in the belief of that teaching, that there will come a time when the Bishop of London will realise as fully as some of us realise it, the truth of this doctrine, and that this doctrine and the other teachings of Theosophy are not antagonistic to Christianity.

It will be Mrs. Besant's duty and pleasure, on the 1st July, in the large Queen's Hall, Langham Place, to speak on the subject: "Is Theosophy anti Christian?" and that lecture will take the form of an answer to the Bishop of London. And now it only remains for me to present to you one whom, perhaps, the Bishop of London regards as an arch-hetic, one who is the author of *Esoteric Christianity*, and whom I am proud to call my teacher in all things high and spiritual.

Mrs. BESANT said:—

Friends:—There is no doubt that to all of us some



regret must enter into this lecture in the absence of the Chairman, whom we hoped to greet. But to my mind the real importance of the question is not that one clergyman should be forbidden by one Bishop to take the chair at a theosophical lecture; but the underlying point of vital importance to England is whether the Church of Christ is to stand aside from her proper place as a leader of human thought in the discussion of those great questions which more and more are disturbing the minds of thoughtful men. Such a question as that of Re-incarnation, declared by Max Müller to be a belief held by all the greatest minds that humanity has produced, is surely a question to the discussion of which the earnest Christian will come, in order to see whether it contains aught of truth, whether it has anything to say to the modern world which will help that world to understand the mysteries of life and of the human soul. The side taken is a different matter, but it cannot be well for the future of Christianity that the Christian should not take his part in that great discussion, so that, in studying the subject, all men may have the advantage of the minds of those who are trained in the best traditions of Christianity, and that the truth may not be robbed of the services of those who might lend much of light and of hope to discussions dealing with matters so important as the one of to-night.

Now, this question of Re-incarnation is so large a one that in the title I have chosen I have limited the scope of our thought to-night. I do not pretend to deal with the whole of the doctrine, but with that special aspect of it: "The Necessity for Re-incarnation." There are many questions that will arise in the mind of the listener, many questions that in one brief lecture I cannot hope to answer: why we do not all remember the past; why we do not find, in looking back, clear mental illumination on the way in which our characters have grown, our thought-powers, our moral powers have de-

veloped. Many questions of that sort will arise, but if to-night I can succeed in showing you that there is at least a good case for re-incarnation as a rational explanation of life, of human progress, of human character; if I can show you that it enables us to understand many of the problems of life; if I can show you, as I shall try to do, that science demands it now in order to complete its theory of evolution; if I can show you that it is a necessity from the moral standpoint, if we would keep our belief in divine justice and divine love in facing many of the terrible facts of human life and of human pain; if I can show you it is a necessity for human perfection; and then if, lastly, I can show you that, with all this pressing necessity to accept it, it is not a doctrine which belongs to eastern religions alone; if I can show you that it is a doctrine that belongs to primitive Christianity as much as to other great religions of the world; if I can show you that in Christian antiquity it took its place unchallenged for five centuries among the doctrines taught by the great doctors and bishops of the Christian Church; if I can show you that it has never quite fallen out of Christian thought, that it has never quite lost its place in Christian literature, and that its revival to-day is the revival of a truth partially forgotten, and not an effort to graft into the Christian faith a doctrine from an alien creed; then, perhaps, having shown the necessity, I may clear away something of the confusion in the mind of the ordinary Christian, which almost makes him shrink from considering the doctrine, and in this way may do all I hope to do, stimulate your own minds to think and to judge, stimulate your own powers of thought to accept or to reject as seems to you good. For I do not hold that it is the duty of the lecturer to dogmatise, to lay down the law as to what another should think. I do not hold that it is the duty of the lecturer to do the thinking work, and then demand that the conclusion shall be accepted. The duty of the lecturer is only to

put forth the truth as the truth is seen <sup>6</sup>by him, leaving it to the individual reason and the individual conscience to reject or accept as seems to it good. That, then, is what I have to do, to put the case before you ; you are the judges, not I.

First, then, as to the scientific necessity for Re-incarnation. Now, there are two great doctrines of evolution which may be said to divide the scientific world. One of them is falling rather into the background, the other coming more and more to the front. The first is the evolutionary teaching of Charles Darwin, the second the later teaching of Weissmann. Now, these two doctrines are both important to us : both, in order to complete them, need this teaching of Re-incarnation. For under both certain questions arise to which re-incarnation gives the only answer, certain problems which remain unsolved save in the light of this ancient and universal teaching. I do not say that because the problems are unsolved by science therefore this teaching is necessarily true ; but I do say that when you find a doctrine put forward which explains problems, which explains that which science does not explain, answers difficulties that science does not answer, that then that doctrine deserves at least a hearing in the minds of thoughtful men, in order that they may see whether there is not there a possible explanation of the otherwise apparently inexplicable facts.

Take for a moment Charles Darwin's evolutionary teaching in the broadest possible light. Two great points come out as dealing with the progress of intelligence and of morality. First, the idea that qualities are transmitted from parent to offspring, and that by the accumulated force of that transmission intelligence and morality develop. As step after step is taken by humankind, the results of the climbing are transmitted to the offspring, who, starting as it were from the platform built up by the past, are able to climb further

in the present, and transmit enriched to their posterity the legacy that they receive. Along that line human progress seems possible and full of hope. Secondly, side by side with that stands the doctrine of conflict, of what is called "survival of the fittest;" of qualities which enable some to survive, and by the survival to hand down to their progeny those qualities that gave them an advantage in the struggle for existence.

Now, those two chief points—transmission of quality from parent to offspring, survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence—are two of the problems that are very, very difficult to deal with from the ordinary Darwinian standpoint. Transmission of qualities I will deal with at the same time as I speak of Weissmann; but on the second point, the question that we are obliged to ask the Darwinian with regard to the growth of the higher intelligence, and especially of moral qualities, is this: It is admitted that the qualities that are the most purely human, compassion, love, sympathy, the sacrifice of the strong for the protection of the weak, the willingness to give life for the benefit of others, these are the qualities that we recognise as human over against the qualities that we share with the brute. The more of these qualities show out in man the more human is man considered to be, and so much is that recognised that the late Prof. Huxley, in his last lecture at Oxford in the Sheldonian Theatre, declared, in trying to deal with this problem, that you had to recognise that man, a fragment of the cosmos, set himself against the law of the cosmos; that he advanced by self-surrender, and not by the survival of the fittest; that he developed by self-sacrifice, and not by the trampling of the strong upon the weak, which was the law of growth in the lower kingdoms of nature. And he asked the question: How is it that the fragment can set itself against the whole and evolve by a law which is against the law by which all the lower kingdoms developed? And he answered it in a tentative

way: Is it because in man there is the same consciousness as that which underlies the universe? Whether he was prepared or not to answer that question in the affirmative we cannot say, but this remains from the mouth of that great preacher of evolution, that the law of progress for the man is the law of sacrifice and not the law of struggle. But then, what does that mean? When you are face to face with the survival of the fittest, what does this mean? For those who sacrifice themselves die out. How does mother love arise and grow, even in the brute creation, among those we call the social animals and even among the fiercest, the beasts of prey? How does that quality develop? how does it increase? Clearly we see that among the animals the mother sacrifices herself for her helpless offspring, conquering the law of self-preservation, the preservation of her own life, victorious over the fear of man which is interwoven in the nature of the brute that is wild. The mother bird, the mother animal, will sacrifice her own life in order to draw away her enemy, man, from the cave or the hiding-place where her young ones are hidden, mother-love triumphing over even the love of life. But she dies in the sacrifice. Those who show it most perish, sacrifices to maternal affection; and if, as we must see when we look at it, the social virtues, the human virtues, tend to kill out their possessors and to leave the more selfish and more brutal alive, then how can you explain in man the growth of the spirit of self-sacrifice, how explain this continuing growth in the most divine qualities which incapacitate the man for the struggle of existence?

Now Darwinianism does not really answer that question. Attempts are made to answer it. Those who have studied Darwinian writings know that the question is not fully faced, is rather evaded than answered. Reincarnation gives the answer, that in the continuing life, whether of the animal or of the man, that self-sacrifice

stirs up on the side of character a new power, a new life, a compelling strength, which comes back over and over again to the world in ever higher and higher manifestations; that though the form of the mother perishes, the mother soul survives, and comes back time after time; those who are such mother souls are trained onward, first in the brute kingdom and then in the human kingdom, so that that which is gained by the soul at the sacrifice of the body comes back in the re-incarnating soul to bless and to lift the world. The persistence of the soul it is that makes that growth in moral character possible.

We come to the question of transmission of qualities that, as I said, leads us into the view of Weissmann. Weissmann has established two fundamental facts, first the continuity of physical life—fairly clear to ordinary vision, but proved by him in a way that goes further than any scientific thought went before him—on the one side continuity of physical life, and we shall see that we need, to complete it, continuity of intellectual and moral life. And the reason we need it along the Weissmann line is his second fundamental fact. Weissmann declares—and ever more and more is that view being accepted—that mental and moral and other acquired qualities are not transmitted to offspring, that they can only be transmitted when they have worked themselves slowly and by degrees into the very fabric of the physical body of the people concerned. Mental and moral qualities not being transmitted—and the evidence for this is becoming overwhelming—where will you have the reason for human progress, unless, side by side with the continuity of protoplasm, you have the continuity of an evolving, of a developing soul? Not only is that necessary, but along with this same theory, backed up as it is by facts of observation, we find that the higher the organism the greater the tendency towards sterility, or towards a very great limiting of the number of the off-

spring produced. Genius — it is becoming almost a commonplace in science—genius is sterile, and by that it is meant that the genius does not tend in the first place largely to increase the number of the race, and secondly, that even where a genius has a child the child does not show the qualities of the genius, but for the most part is commonplace, tending even to be below the average of the time. Now that is a subject of enormous importance for the future. For the genius of to-day ought to mark the normal level of hundreds of years hence. The genius of to-day, whether the genius of intellect or of virtue, the high-water mark of present human progress, should show the place to which the ocean will rise presently, as the generations go on. If he is only a mere sport of nature, if he is only the result of some fortunate accident, if he is only the outcome of some unknown cause, then he brings us no message of hope, no promise for the future; but if it be that in that individual genius you are to find a soul that by long experience has gathered the qualities with which he was this time born: if it be that, side by side with the continuity of protoplasm, there is also a continuity of soul, growing, developing, evolving, as forms grow, develop and evolve, ah! then the genius is only the forerunner of a greater humanity, and the lowest child of earth may hope in future to climb to the height of intelligence or of virtue on which he stands. And this view of genius is strengthened by investigation; for we notice that genius is to be found along two especial lines -- that of the genius of pure intellect or virtue, and that of the artist that demands a peculiar co-operation of the body. The first asks little or nothing from physical heredity, but you cannot have the great genius in music unless you have with it a specialised body, a delicacy of nervous organisation, a fineness of touch, a keenness of ear. These physical things are required in order that musical genius may show itself forth at its highest.

There the co-operation of physical heredity is demanded, and what do you find when you study the stories of musical genius? That he is generally born in a musical family; that for two or three generations before the great genius, some amount of musical talent has been marked in the family in which he appears; and that when he, the genius, appears, then that musical talent dies out, and the family goes back into the ordinary run of average people. The family flowers in the genius; he does not hand on his genius to his posterity.

Now those problems and puzzles of heredity find their rational explanation in the teaching of Re-incarnation; for what is it? It is the teaching that that breathed into the form is a portion of the life of God. Like a seed, a germ, the germinal spirit comes forth into the world of matter with all divine possibilities hidden within it, as within the seed the possibilities of the plant that gave it birth are hidden; in that germinal spirit are all divine powers, that man may become perfect as his Father in heaven is perfect. But in order that that perfection may be attained, there must be growth, experience, evolution; in each life on earth experience must be gathered; in the long interval between death and re-birth the experience gathered on the earth is woven in the invisible worlds into the fabric of the soul; when that germinal spirit comes back to earth, it comes with this soul-clothing of qualities woven out of the experience gathered in its previous life on earth, and the innate ideas of the child are the result of the weaving during the heavenly life into quality of the experience of the earth-life that lies behind. When that experience is transmuted into quality, then spirit and soul come back to earth, start on the platform already gained by experience and by struggle, and carry on the evolution with the advantage of the innate qualities which are the result of the previous life. During the new life more experience, more struggle, material for further growth; the weaving



of that again into higher qualities during the renewed interval between death and re-birth. And so, on and on, rung after rung of the ladder of progress; at the bottom of that human ladder the lowest savage; at the top of that human ladder, the greatest saint and the noblest intellect, genius built up by slow degrees, built up by countless struggles, built up by failure as well as victory, by evil as well as good, the evils of the past the steps whereon man rises into virtue, so that even in the lowest criminal we see the promise of divinity. He, too, shall rise where the saint is standing, and in all the children of men God shall at last be seen. That is the theory of Re-incarnation.

Now, let us see if it does not fit the facts from the scientific standpoint. We see now how the genius will have grown. He does not come suddenly into the world with nothing behind him, suddenly God-created. He comes with the qualities he has gradually developed by struggle in his past. We can understand, as we look at him, why the children of to-day, born of civilised parents, respond quickly to moral teaching, answer to moral appeal; and why a child of the savage, a young soul, a child soul, cannot respond to those teachings, no matter how carefully you may try to instruct him. The answer of the children of the civilised man of to-day to the moral ideal, to moral precepts, is almost immediate. The child responds to it by nature; the child of the savage does not so. You cannot take the savage child and lift him to the point at which your own children are to be found whilst still in the nursery. They have not the power to respond. But the moment you admit the continuing spirit, the moment you admit the weaving into quality of experiences, that in the character of the new-born child you can see the results of his past, then you begin to understand why man should have progressed, even though Weissmann be right when he says that acquired qualities are not transmitted; for those

mental and moral qualities are not the gift of the parent, they are the hard-won spoils of victory of the individual soul; and each soul comes to his birth into the new body with the results of his past lives in his hand to work with in the present. Thus this theory fills up the gaps in the scientific one, answers the problems that science cannot answer, and more and more it appears as we notice the lines of evolution of modern science, that this theory of Re-incarnation is wanted in order to complete the theory and to make intelligible the progress of character and intelligence side by side with the evolution of the form.

Moreover, the marks of growth that we see among men are clear signs of a past, of difference of soul-age, if I may use the word. Wherever you go through nature, looking at things of the same kind, you find them at different stages of growth; and you constantly find in the more developed creature marks of the past up which he has evolved. Now, this is not only true of bodies; it is equally true of the soul in man, for you see, when you look at man, all stages of intelligence, all stages of moral growth. At the present moment in this one country, in this one town, you could bring together thousands of men at different stages of evolution in intelligence and in moral capacity. How are they to be explained? I am not now thinking of the moral point to which I shall come in a moment. How are they to be explained scientifically? Why these great differences? or why even the small differences? If you say "Growth," you are on sound scientific ground, because everywhere in nature you see growth, differences of size, differences of development, and these are stages of the growth of the living creature. Why only in intelligence and morality is this principle of growth to be thrown on one side, as explaining difference of state, and the principle—thrown out everywhere by science—the theory of sudden creation, of a sudden

appearance without cause, without antecedents, without anything to explain it, be held to explain (if the word may be used) the differences in the growth of intelligence and of morality in different human beings? Moreover, you find in human intelligence marks of its past, similar to the marks of the past in human bodies; intelligence in a new body swiftly runs over its past evolution, as all careful observers of the unfolding of intelligence in the child know well.

But that brings me to the moral question. I said that re-incarnation is a necessity morally if we are to keep our belief in the divine justice and the divine love face to face with the facts of life. Now let me take two cases, the reality of which will be very plain to every one of you. I choose extreme cases in order to make the illustration very clear. Go down into one of the worst slums of London. Children are born into those slums of vilest parentage, looked at from the point of view of physical heredity, looked at from the moral and intellectual status of father and mother. Now you can tell one of the children of whom I am thinking, a child-criminal, when you see it in the cradle; you know as you look at that baby form, that that child is doomed to a life of misery and crime. You can tell it by the shape of the head; you can tell by the whole type of the features that that child is a criminal child. And it is true. They are the despair of the educator, as I know who have had to deal with them, as all know who are brought into touch with them. They will not respond to moral appeal, but only to fear, most brutalising of instructors. There is no moral answer at all; there is no answer such as anyone of you would find from a child in your own nursery. The child comes into the world with the criminal taint upon him. How is he brought up? He is brought up in that miserable surrounding that some of you may know, where the teachers of the child are blows and curses, where the

child is taught to steal as you teach your child to be honest, where he is flogged for not lying, where vice is rewarded, where any attempt at right-doing is punished. That is the atmosphere in which he is brought up. He is taught to look upon society as his enemy, the law as his tyrant, the policeman as his foe—to have his hand turned against society. What is the inevitable result? That he falls into the hands of the law. The law nowadays tries to be more merciful than it was 20 or 30 years ago, and tries reform. But reform is only possible where there is something within the brain and heart to respond to it. And I am taking the case—there are only too many of them—where this power of response is not found. He goes on from one crime to another, from one imprisonment to another, gradually developing into that shame of our civilisation—a habitual criminal. From one stage of vice to another he proceeds, none to help him, none to rescue him, none to uplift him, until at last, in some mad moment of despair, or drunkenness, or passion, he strikes an angry blow that takes a human life, and then human justice takes from him the life which has slain another, and he ends his miserable career in the quicklime of the prison-yard. His fault? He never had a chance. He came into the world a criminal; he has left it a criminal. That is his life's story.

Another child is born, and as you look on that child in the cradle you see the stamp of genius upon him from the birth hour: you see in the shape of head and type of feature the splendour of the human soul that resides within that baby form. He is born of noble parents, who surround him with all gentleness, and kindness, and tenderness. He is petted and caressed into nobility of living, as the other was beaten into crime. Every effort he makes is encouraged; he hears around him all words of cheer and inspiration where the other had nought but curses and derision. His splendid qualities grow and

expand: he becomes greater and greater as year after year passes over his head. He is given the very best education the land can give; his countrymen salute his genius as the glory of their race. On, year after year, he goes, ever brighter and brighter, climbing higher and higher, until at last amid a nation's sorrow Westminster Abbey receives the remains of his mortal body, and his name shines, a star in history, which all men admire and revere. His merit? He was born into the world a genius.

Who sent those two souls on their life's journeys? If you say that the criminal came newly into the world God-created, and the genius came also newly into the world God-created, ah! then what becomes of the divine justice upon which the hopes of humanity must rest? For if the one could be made straight from his Creator's hands, why should the other be made? If the genius in intellect can be created, why then the idiot? If the saint can be created, why then the criminal? I know you may say: "These are not questions that we can answer." But it is these questions that drive hundreds of noble hearts into infidelity, into a scepticism which is really more fervent than belief. I speak of what I know. These are the things that made me an unbeliever for many, many years. It was human pain and, worse than human pain, human degradation--for human sin is worse than human misery--it was those facts that made me an unbeliever; for I preferred not to believe in God rather than to believe in a supreme injustice and the lack of love at the world's heart. And these questions are not the questions of the thoughtless, the indifferent and the profligate; they are the questions of ripe intelligences and of noble hearts. And religion must find an answer to these questions if she is to keep the noblest of the children of men within her pale. There is one reason why I ask for discussion of this question, and why it seems to me that it is the religious

teachers of the people who are most concerned in such problems of human life.

Now look at this same thing still from the standpoint of justice and of love. Some religious people believe that this one human life decides the whole course of the future. Others do not accept that view, but think that on the other side of the grave progress, or happiness for all, is possible. Now if progress be admitted, then the whole principle of Re-incarnation is granted. For, whether it be in this or in other worlds, if progress be admitted as the law of life, the growth of the spirit and the soul is granted. But suppose, with the great majority in Christendom, that men believe either that this life decides the whole fate of the soul hereafter, or believe that though all will pass into bliss, this life is but one, one single life, then how very difficult to reconcile the facts with that. For a human soul is born into the world in a baby's body and dies in a few days. Another goes through a long life of 60 or 70 years. If the first idea be accepted, that this life decides the whole future, then it becomes very hard for the man who lives out his life to run the risk of eternal loss, from which the baby, by the mere fact of his early death, is secured. A terrible injustice that, when you come to think of it; because none would say that the child who dies a few hours old runs any risk of misery hereafter. Then why should he reap the fruit of bliss which may be forfeited by the older man in his struggles in the world in the course of his long life? This difference of the length of human life becomes inseparable from the question of justice, if you are going to admit only this one life. And if you say that, of what use is the life if the child who has only had two or three hours of it reaches the same everlastingness of bliss as the man who, through a life of struggle, has won virtue and triumphed over temptation? Does this life matter or not? That is the problem to be solved. If it does not

matter, and the new-born babe dying finds eternal happiness, then it is very hard that so many should have to go through a life of pain and suffering and have nothing to show for it at the end. What avails that experience if this theory of life be true? And when the old man dies full of wisdom, full of the fruits of experience, full of tender sympathy and compassion, where are those fruits that he has won by his life's experience to be utilised? In a life of ceaseless bliss? They are of no use in such a life. But this world has need of them. This world wants them. And if he can bring them back here to the service of humanity, after the growth on the other side has woven them into his very nature, ah! then that long life will indeed have its fruit in human service, and we can realise the value of the physical life as one of the factors in the universe. And if it be admitted that human life has its use on the other side, then what of the babe who is shut out from that one chance of valuable experience, and goes through everlastingness with a perpetual want, the want of that one human life which others have possessed?

And pass again to another question, which has always seemed to me even more important from the standpoint of the divine life--a life of degradation, the life of the drunkard, of the undeveloped human soul, who simply slouches through the world with his eyes down, with his mind unawake, with no power to appreciate the beauty of this wonderful world, and all the marvellous things that are to be found within its limits. Compare such a creature as that, whose life is nothing more than a few bodily sensations, a few passions, and an occasional crude thought; compare that, his only experience of human life, with the life of the cultured, thoughtful, well-developed intelligence, who takes joy in all beauty, in all that is gracious and fair in the world; and ask why one should have as his only experience of life that miserable

crawling through the slime of earth, while the other, born, just as the first was born, with nothing behind him, is to soar into visions of beauty and delight, and find in his experience of the earth so much that makes it full and beautiful and helpful? It is not fair, it is not right, if we all have but the one experience. How does Re-incarnation deal with that? It tells us that out from the bosom of the eternal Father come all these germinal spirits that He sends into the world of matter for their growth and development; that all begin ignorant, helpless; that all gradually grow upwards, developing their inherent powers; that man is born into the world to become perfect. Has it ever struck you to ask what mean those wondrous words of the Christ: "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect"? Think how magnificent that ideal. And how is it to be done? Why, even we, who, according to this teaching of Re-incarnation, have climbed so high from our earliest beginnings in this spirit life, can we say, with our weaknesses and our follies, with the limitations of our knowledge and of our power, that in this one life, even starting with all the advantages we have, we can become perfect as God in heaven is perfect? And yet nothing less than that is man's destiny; that, and nothing less than that, is the word of the Christ to His disciples. Surely He who is called "The Truth" would not have given a command which cannot be fulfilled. But we have this divine perfection within us, as within the seed is the power of the tree. And we need but time for the fulfilling of the command, for the growth into the splendour of the Image in which we are made. So that from that standpoint also this seems to be necessary. You may say, "Yes, in other worlds"; but, then, why? What is the sense of sending people at every stage of growth into this one particular world? Where did the higher ones earn their powers? In other worlds have birth? If so,



why come for one lesson into this world, and then go on into other worlds again? For all the varieties are here, lowest and highest, and every step between. And if you admit growth on the other side, then you must explain the differences of growth in this world—why, one is dowered with so much more than another. Is it not more likely, more reasonable, more in accordance with all we know of nature, that this world is a school into which come souls, beginning in the infant class, going on stage after stage, which is life after life, until they reach the highest class in the school, and then going on in the other worlds, where other lessons are to be learned, a vast progress of unending evolution? but in this world certain classes have to be passed through which cannot be passed through in the limits of a single life. So that from that standpoint also Re-incarnation seems to be a necessity, to say nothing of the glory and the inspiration that it gives to human life. For if I know, in this life of mine, that every effort I am making, every aspiration in which I lift my heart to God, every hope that I strive to realise, every service that imperfectly I try to do, is the seed of a harvest that shall have its reaping, is the building of a faculty that hereafter I may use in divine and human service; if I know that, however weak, however failing, however ignorant, everything that I learn is mine for everlasting, and that I shall come back again and again until all life's lessons are learned; ah! then I shall not break my heart because I am still ignorant, because I am still foolish, because I am still sinful; I shall know that although I am weak to-day I shall be strong to-morrow, and that there is not one height reached by the highest saint which shall not also be mine in time to come, who am climbing the same ladder that he has climbed so long. There is the hope of evolution brought into the life of the individual; there the glory that Re-incarnation sheds on

human life; for when I now see the downcast, the miserable, the lowest of human kind, I can feel: You are only my younger brother, a baby in the school of life, where I have been for a longer period than you; the same God lives in you that lives in me; and I have for him the tenderness, the compassion, that the elder brother feels for the baby struggling on the floor. It is with no hatred, no contempt, no derision, that I regard him, but with the recognition of a common life which will be unfolded in him to-morrow, as I in years gone by struggled also where he struggles now. There is the secret for the uplifting of the degraded, which it seems to me that nothing else can give; for if they do not catch this idea, there is a sense of injustice, of unfairness, of being flung into a world into which they did not ask to come, into misery and into degradation. But if it is only the beginning of the experience of the divine life within them, the learning of the alphabet of life, then there is no feeling of despair nor of anger, but perfect justice as well as perfect love is at the heart of the world. For there is only one explanation, it seems to me, of love side by side with human misery, and it is that this education is *necessary* for the unfolding of the divine powers in man. If it is not necessary, it is not born of love. And if it be necessary, then it cannot be escaped by any; all must go through it or else remain for ever imperfect, because they have not had that experience in human life.

Pass from the view of the necessity, and let us ask whether this, which seems so necessary, is a doctrine which does not belong to Christendom as much as to any other people, to any other faith. Now every student knows that this doctrine was common amongst the Jews. You may read in their books that it was the common faith of the time. You can see it in the questions that in the Gospels are sometimes put to the disciples and to the Christ. Remember the words spoken by the Christ

Himself to the disciples when they questioned Him of John the Baptist; "If you can receive it this is Elijah." Remember His answer when they brought to Him the challenge of the people outside; "How say the Scribes that Elijah must first come?" His answer was "He has come already; and they understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist." This is simply one case showing the familiarity of the idea among the Jews, just as you may find it in the writings I refer to, that they said that all imperfect souls had to return to the earth. Then take, still within the limits of the Gospels themselves, that remarkable statement about the man born blind. "Which did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Ante-natal sin. Now the answer that was given, "Neither did this man sin nor his parents that he was born blind," and another reason being given, is very significant. For if the knowledge of the Christ had been the same as the ordinary belief now-a-days, that ante-natal sin is impossible, the only answer would have been: "Why ask me the foolish question whether a man is born blind because of his sin? How could he sin before birth?" A different reason given for the blindness, but not a natural rebuke of the folly which ascribed a defect at birth to the sin of the individual who was born. Come away from those authoritative records of Christianity to the writings and teachings of those who lived in the early centuries after Christ, and see how often in the writings of the great Fathers of the Church this doctrine of the ✓ pre-existence of the soul is taught. One of the plainest teachings of it is found in the writings of that noblest of the Fathers, Origen. He lays it down distinctly that each person born into the world receives a body according to his deserts and his former actions; a very very clear statement. And Origen, remember, was one of the grandest minds of which the early Church could boast, one of the noblest and purest characters, and he

taught that doctrine definitely and clearly. Take other great bishops, and you will find them speaking along the same line; and for five-and-a-half centuries after the death of Christ that was a current doctrine of the Christian Church. And when, in the middle of the 6th century, it was condemned by a council, it was not condemned as a general doctrine, but only in the form in which Origen had put it, so that you have absolutely no Christian authority against it. The Roman Catholic may object to the form into which Origen threw it, and say that that form was condemned by a council of the Church, but he cannot say that the whole doctrine of Re-incarnation was condemned, for there is no such condemnation of the doctrine known in Christian history. On the other hand, you have it taught over and over again by the men who received the original deposit of the faith. And it never quite disappeared. Granted that it disappeared from the authorised, the official, teachings of the Church, it survived in many of the so-called heretical bodies. The Albigenses taught it. Many other bodies, through the Middle Ages and onward, claimed a truer tradition than that of the Roman Church, and carried this doctrine on as part of the primitive tradition. And when you come down through the various Christian writers, how often does this doctrine come to the front, especially amongst the philosophers and poets--the poets because of their intuitions; the philosophers because, as Hume said, the only doctrine of the immortality of the soul at which the philosopher can look is a doctrine that affirms its pre-existence. And that necessarily; for once the philosopher allows it is necessary for the existence of a soul that it should be provided with a human body at birth, there follows the probability that when death strikes away that body, the soul will no longer be able to exist. And one of the roots of modern scepticism lies in this most illogical doctrine--that a soul which is

to last for ever after death did not exist for ever before birth. Then later, you find it appearing in a very interesting manner in the Church of England. I came across, some three years ago, a pamphlet written by a clergyman of the Church of England of the 17th century, in which he laid it down as an essential doctrine of Christianity that the soul existed before birth, and he quoted in that pamphlet a number of other pamphlets, written about the same time, putting forward the same teaching, giving quotations from them, as well as tracing it back through the early Fathers and through the great Churches of Christendom. And he, though putting forward that view, apparently had no condemnation from his Bishop, nor from anyone who objected to his view as being really Christian teachings. Take the German philosophers; you find it among them necessarily. Take Goethe, one of those great intuitional minds who see the truth that lies behind the appearance of things. Or have you forgotten that most Christian of poets, Wordsworth, and his declaration, long before the Theosophical Society came to disturb people's minds in this country?

“ Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,  
 The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
 Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
 And cometh from afar.  
 Not in entire forgetfulness  
 And not in utter nakedness  
 But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
 From God who is our home.”

There you have his view: “hath had elsewhere its setting.” Poet after poet teaches the same, poet after poet who by the light of genius sees through the veil of matter and realises by the poetic intuition the truth about the human soul. Now surely if we find this doctrine taught by the early fathers, strongly hinted at, if nothing more, I should say asserted, by the Christ, existing in Christendom through its whole history even

though thrown aside by the official Church, re-appearing again in England in the very bosom of the English Church in the 17th century, re-affirmed by English poets and German philosophers, is it not better to look at it as a part of the great heritage of Christendom rather than as an alien doctrine coming from other religions? It is perfectly true, of course, that every great religion of the past has taught this doctrine. It is true you find it in the Book of the Dead; that you find it in Chaldea; that you find it in the ancient teachings in China; that you find it in all the Indian Scriptures, and in the Buddhist Scriptures; that you find it in Greece and in Rome. But it is not because of that that I am putting it forward here, in an audience gathered in a Christian land. I say to you, it is yours as much as theirs, and if you accept the doctrine of re-incarnation, do not accept it as an alien doctrine that comes from some other faith; take it as part of the great Christian revelation; take it as part of the great Christian teaching. Admit that it fell out of sight for a while under the blackness of ignorance that swept over Europe. Admit that it dropped below the surface in times when men were not thinking of these great problems that face you to-day. But as you value the work that this faith is to do in the West, the one religion which is possible in the West, for to the West it was given, do not, as you prize that faith, put aside as alien, as heretical, a doctrine which is coming back into the Christian Church by some of its best thinkers, by some of its best teachers. Clergyman after clergyman in the Church of England has accepted it, and is beginning to teach it. Writer after writer is seeing in this the safety of Christianity from the shafts of scepticism arising from the conscience as well as from the intellect. And I put it to you to-day for your consideration—not for your *acceptance*, because the belief that can be gained by listening to one brief lecture would be worth-

less as an intellectual conviction and useless in its bearing upon life—I ask you to think, to consider, to clear away the prejudice which looks on it as unchristian and as alien, to recognise that, if it be true, then inevitably it is part of the truth of Christianity, and that history will justify you in that statement, showing it to be part of the faith once delivered to the Saints.

Friends, if I speak to you on this to-night it is because I know what the doctrine has of hope, of strength, of encouragement, in the face of the difficulties in the world. I know what it means for the heartbroken, who fall in despair before the puzzles of life, to have the light thrown upon it which makes life intelligible; for the misery of intellectual unrest is one of the worst miseries that we face in the modern world. To be able to understand what we are, to be able to understand whence we have come and whither we are going, to see all through the world one law as there is one life, to realise that there is no partiality, no injustice, no unfair treatment of one human soul, no unfair treatment of one human life; that all are growing; that all are evolving; that our elders are only elders and not different in kind from ourselves; that the youngest shall be as the oldest: that man has within him the developing spirit of his Father and shall therefore be perfect as God is perfect; that is the hope—nay, not the hope, the certainty—that this doctrine gives to the human soul. And when we have grasped it we can face the miseries, the sorrows, the despairs of life, and know that in the end, looking back upon this sorrowful world, we shall say, “It was from God, it came from God, and to God it returns.”

THE MEANING  
AND THE  
USE OF PAIN

BY

ANNIE BESANT

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to it another which I think I mentioned previously, but which is essential for the work that I have to do now—to explain to you the meaning and the use of pain.

The spiritual Self is conscious on his own plane from the very beginning. Offspring of the Universal Consciousness, what else could he be? But as he descends into this manifested universe, and as he clothes himself in body after body, or in sheath after sheath, the eyes, so to speak, of the Self become blinded by these successive veils that he wraps around him, and so when he arrives at the lowest stage of his manifestation—this physical universe in which we are—the Spirit has become blinded by Matter, and is no longer conscious of his own high destiny or of his own essential nature in the physical universe.

Now, it is this blinded Self, as we know, that comes into the manifested universe for the sake of learning and of gathering experience. Let us think of him for a moment as wearing those bodies that by this time must have become so familiar to you—the body in which he *thinks*, the mind or mentality; the body in which he *feels*, that we generally speak of as the “body of desire,” because feeling and desire are so very closely connected, and feelings of pleasure and of pain arise from contact with things from without, which work on this body of desire, and make it to be

either attracted<sup>d</sup> to or repelled from external objects.

Think, then, for a moment of the Self clothed in this body of desire, and blinded by it to his own real nature and to the true conditions in which he finds himself. He will be attracted by all sorts of external objects; attracted by those from which he gains the sensation of pleasure, repelled, of course, by those from which he feels the sensation of pain. So that coming into this world—of which he knows nothing, you must remember, for I am taking him in the very earliest stages of his experience—coming into this world of which he knows nothing, he will naturally be strongly attracted to that which gives him pleasure by contact, which makes him feel that which he recognises as joy or happiness or content. Thus attracted to everything which appears to him desirable, he will often find that the gratification of desire is followed by suffering. Attracted by the desirable object, and without experience which would enable him to distinguish and to discriminate, he flings himself, as it were, towards this attractive thing, only knowing that he feels pleasure in the contact. Presently out of this contact, which was pleasurable, pain grows up; and by that pain he finds that he has flung himself against something that is not desirable, but repellent. And over and over and over again he will have

this experience ; constantly reiterated<sup>e</sup> he will find this lesson, which is taught him by the external universe.

Let us take two very common animal appetites which, thus attracted and gratified by pleasure, turn into sources of pain. Let us take that of attractive food, which would work on the sense of taste, which is part of the body of desire ; this food will attract the sense of taste, and the unconscious Spirit—unconscious, that is, on this plane as to the results that will follow—is run away with by this pleasure of contact ; if I may repeat the old Eastern simile that I have used so often, that the senses are like horses that are yoked to the chariot of the body, and that carry away the Soul towards the objects of desire. He will gratify, then, the sense of taste to excess ; he will pass into gluttony. The result of this gratification of the sense of taste without experience will be the pain that will follow on the over-gratification. So again if he gratifies the sense of taste, say by over-drinking, by the taking of alcohol. There again pain will follow on the gratification of the immediate desire. And when this has been repeated over and over and over again, this Spirit—which as mind is able to *think*—connects the two things together, connects the gratification of the desire with the pain which follows on that gratification

and in this way<sup>9</sup> he gradually comes to understand that there are laws in the universe connected with his physical body, and that if he comes into contact with those laws and tries to violate them, he will suffer as a result. It is just as though a person flung himself against an invisible wall and was bruised by the contact. Over and over again a person might thus fling himself, attracted by some object visible on the other side of this invisible barrier but if he bruised himself every time, he would learn to connect the going after that object with the pain which he felt. Thus there would grow up in his mind the idea of sequence, of cause and effect, of the relationship existing between the gratification and the suffering which followed after it; in this way there would become impressed on this infant mind that is learning its lessons, that there is something in the world that is stronger than itself—a Law which it cannot break; a Law which it may endeavor to violate but which it cannot violate, and which will prove its existence by the suffering which is inflicted when the Spirit flings himself against that barrier. And thus with object of desire after object of desire this lesson will be learned, until an accumulated mass of experience will gradually be gained by the Spirit and he will learn by pain to regulate his desires and no longer to let the<sup>9</sup> horses of the senses

gallop whithersoever they will, but to curb them and rein them in, and permit them only to go along the roads that are really desirable. Thus the lesson of self-control will be the result of this painful experience.

Now it may be said here, or thought, that after all we have this body of desire in common with the lower animal, and that the lower animal is in one curious way distinct from man: that it is mostly guided to the avoidance of this painful experience by what we call instinct; that while man has the experience constantly until he learns self-control, the animal by an innate inherited experience, as it has been called, which we speak of as instinct, is, to a very great extent at least, preserved from this experience of pain. And that is so. Observing the fact, we ask the reason. And the reason is not far to seek. First, I ought perhaps to say, in order to guard against possibility of mistake, that people to some extent exaggerate the force of instinct in the highest animals. In the lower animals the rule of instinct is fairly complete. In the higher animals it is less complete than in the lower, and some experience is often needed by them before the instinct becomes a thoroughly safe guide for them. And the reason in their case, and the deeper reason in our own case, is this: that in man you have not only to deal with this body

of desire—which, if it were alone, would be guided by an external law, which would direct it towards the objects that were healthful and health-giving and make it avoid the objects which were fatal or dangerous—but you have in man the coming in of the Soul: that is, of the individualised Spirit, which is not to be compelled by a Law from without, but evolved by a Law from within; it is not simply to be forced into conformity with outside Nature by the compulsion to which the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal kingdoms are subjected; it is no longer the case of evolution in the aggregate, of the collective evolution which, in order that it may take place effectively, must be under the control of an external Law. Man is to take his evolution into his own hands; his evolution is to be by experience and not by compulsion; for at this period of evolution Spirit has become individualised by the sheath of mind, and the accumulating experience of the reincarnating Soul is to take the place of the compulsory education of the lower realms in Nature.

And so it is the presence of manas, or mind, in man that makes this element of pain so necessary a part of his education. He is able to remember, he is able to compare, he is able to draw this link of relation between the things that form the sequence of events; and just because he has this

power of thought, of mind, he is able to take his growth into his own hands, that he may become a fellow-worker with Nature; not merely a brick as it were in her edifice, but a self-conscious builder, taking part in that building of the whole.

And so gradually by this education of pain, working upon mind through the body of desire, this knowledge of Law in the external universe grows up. So that here the meaning of pain is hostile contact with Law, the effort to break Law that never can succeed; and the use of pain is the gaining of the knowledge of Law, and so the guiding and the education of the lower nature by the reasoning intelligence.

Let us pass from that view of pain to another. By pain this growing Soul has learned the existence of Law. The next use that is found in pain is a deeper one. By pain is rooted out desire for every object in the external universe, found, in the language of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, to prove one of "the wombs of pain". Desire is that which draws the Soul to re-birth; desire is that which fundamentally causes the manifestation of the universe. It was when "Desire first arose in the bosom of the Eternal" that the germ of the manifested universe appeared; and so always it is desire that leads to manifestation—whether of the whole or of the part; and desire con-

continually draws back the Soul over and over again to earth. Notice that it is desire which draws the Soul *outwards*, always outwards, to the external. And the education of the Soul consists in this passing out into the external, gathering there all knowledge, and then by experience losing its taste for the external and carrying inwards the knowledge it has obtained. But suppose that objects of desire remained desirable, then there would be no end to the revolution of the wheel of births and deaths; then there could be no garnering, as it were, of knowledge, and no real evolution of the highest possibilities. For remember that human perfection is not the end of our growth; it is the end of the present cycle; but this is only the preparation for another, and those who become perfect men in the present cycle are those who, from the calmness of Nirvāna, are to come out in the next period of manifestation, no longer men to be educated, but Builders and Gods to guide the next manifested universe, passing on into that higher sphere of activity and utilising there the experiences that here they have won. It is thus essential that these manifesting Souls that to-day are human but in future millenniums are to be divine—it is necessary that they shall not only gather knowledge but shall also carry it back with them, and so make it part of their own future being;



and in order that this may be done, desire must gradually change its nature until at last it vanishes away. The objects of the lowest external world must become undesirable to the Soul that has gained knowledge; the objects of each phase of the external world, subtle or physical, must become undesirable; everything must become undesirable save the Eternal, which is the essence of the Soul himself; and so gradually the Soul learns by pain in the physical universe to get rid of desire.

There is no other way in which desire can be conquered. You might, if there were no pain in the gratification of these external desires, you might by strong will hold back the horses and prevent them from galloping along the road along which you did not choose that they should go. But you want to do more than hold them back by force—that is a very elementary stage of the progress of the Soul: you want them no longer to *desire* to gallop after these objects; that is, you want to cut off the very root of desire, and that can only be by the objects that once attracted, losing their power of attraction, so that they no longer can draw the Soul outwards; then the Soul, having exhausted everything that he can learn from the object, and having found it productive of pain in the end, no longer finds it desirable, but casts it aside, and carries away only

the knowledge he has gained. For the Soul is like the bee that visits the flower; it does not need to remain always in the flower, it needs only the honey that the flower contains; when it has gathered the honey, the flower is no longer desirable to it. And when the Soul has gathered the honey of knowledge from the flowers of earth, then it is the use of pain that he no longer feels desire for the flower; he has gained from it all that is needed for the lesson, and the pain destroys desire and throws the Soul inward on himself. If you think it over at your leisure you will not, I think, be able to invent any other way of really getting rid of desire. And unless you can get rid of desire for the things of the physical world, you will never feel the inner drawing, first to the things of the mind, and then to those of the Higher Life, which it is the very object of the Soul's evolution to make the experience of all that are born into the world.

But what other use has pain? We have found out two—the learning of Law and the gradual extirpation of desire. The next lesson that we learn through pain is the transitory nature of all that is not of the essence of the Spirit himself. In one of the many allegories of the Hindū Scriptures, you may read how the God of Death, looking at men and sorrowing over their sorrows, wept as he contemplated Humanity; and as the

tears of Yama dropped upon the earth they turned into diseases and miseries which afflicted human kind. Why should the pity of the God have been turned into scourges for the torturing of man? These allegories are always worth thinking over, for always under the veil of the allegory is hidden some truth which reaches you the more surely because of the simile under which it is veiled. What is the God of Death? He is, as it were, the incarnation of change. Sometimes we hear of Yama as Destroyer; the truer word is Regenerator; for there is no such thing as destruction in the manifested universe. Always that which on one side is death, on another side is birth; and that which is change and which seems to destroy is that which in another aspect is giving new form and new shape to the life which is seeking embodiment. And so Yama, the God of Death, is the great representative of change—the change which marks manifestation, the change which is in everything save in the Eternal itself; and inasmuch as he who is change incarnate weeps over men, it is natural that his tears should be the things that teach men the transitory nature of all that surrounds them. And these miseries and diseases into which turn the tears of the God of Death are the lessons which in guise of pain bring the most useful teaching of all—that nothing that is transitory can satisfy

the Soul, and that only by learning the transitory nature of the lower life will the Soul turn to that in which true happiness and satisfaction must lie. Thus, the teaching of the transitoriness of all things is the object of these tears of Yama, and he shows the deepest compassion in the lessons that by pain he gives to human kind. For in this fashion, by disease and misery, by poverty and by grief, we learn that everything that surrounds us—not only in the physical world, but also in the region of desire, and in the region of the mind itself—that all these things are changing, and that in the changing he who is changeless may never find his rest. For at heart we are the Eternal and not the transient; the centre of our life, the very Self within us, is immortal and eternal, he can never change nor die. Therefore, nothing that changes can satisfy him; nothing over which Death has power can bring to him final happiness and peace. But he must learn this lesson through pain, and only in that learning lies the possibility of final joy. Thus the Soul also learns the difference between the stages of transitoriness; very slow are these lessons in the learning, and many a life it takes to complete them. At first the Soul will not think of the Eternal being that in which he must rest; but he will learn to turn from the physical to the mental, to turn from the sensuous

to the intellectual, because relatively the one is permanent to the other, and the happinesses of the mind are lasting as compared with the pleasures of the body. And in the slow course of evolution that lesson is learned long before the lessons of the Spirit are touched, and man becomes a higher creature when he has learned to dominate the animal side and to find satisfaction in the mind and in the intelligence, so that the pleasures of the æsthetic tastes overbear the pleasures of the body, and the pleasures of the mind and of the intellect and of the intelligence are more attractive than the pleasures of the lower senses.

Thus man is gradually evolving to-day, and the great work of human evolution at the present time—speaking of the average human evolution—is not the evolution of the Spirit, but this evolution of the relatively permanent as compared with the senses and of the body in which the waking consciousness of man is still so active. So that what man on the average needs to do is to turn his desires from the transient to the relatively permanent, and rather to cultivate the mind and the intelligence and the artistic side of Nature, instead of seeking the gratification of the senses which he has in common with the lower forms of animal life. And those are helping human evolution who are turning away from the life of the body

and are training themselves in the life of the mind, who are seeking the relatively permanent; although in its turn it will be found to be transitory, still it is a step upward, it is the drawing away of desire from the body to the mind, from the senses to the internal organ, from sensations to ideas and images, and that is part of the experience of the indrawing Soul, which draws himself away from the senses and fixes himself for a while in the inner organ of the mind. And then that inner organ is also found only to give rise to things that are transitory. See, yet, how great is the gain; for conflict between men is over when the desire turns to the intelligence, to the inner organ instead of to the outer things of sense. The things of sense are limited; and men fight the one with the other in order to get their share of the limited quantity. The things of the tastes, the higher tastes, and of the intelligence are practically unlimited, and there is no conflict between men for them; for no man is the poorer because his brother is richly gifted artistically or intellectually; none has his own share diminished because his brother's share is great. And so humanity progresses from competition to co-operation, and learns the lesson of Brotherhood: that the richer you are in intellect the more you can give and the less you need grudge, seeing that we are going upwards to the Higher Life where all

is giving, and where none desires to seize for self. For in this middle region of intellect and of the higher tastes and emotions, there is no need for grudging; but all may share what they have, and find themselves, after the sharing, the richer and not the poorer for the giving.

But even then it is found that satisfaction does not lie that way, for still it is of the nature of desire. On this I pause one moment. On the realisation of the principle that I am now going to put to you depends the whole direction of your life. If you seek gratification of desire you will never find happiness, for every desire that is gratified gives birth to a new desire, and the more desires you gratify the more open mouths there are which demand that they shall be filled. Says an ancient Scripture :

As well might you try to put out a fire by pouring upon it melted butter, as try to get rid of desire by filling it with the objects of desire.

—a saying that is worthy your long and thoughtful consideration. For if happiness does not lie that way, then the great majority of people, especially in civilised lands, are on the wrong road to happiness: they will never reach it along the road they travel. And if you notice the demand of modern life, it is always for more of the same thing which is already possessed—that is, for the multiplication of the objects of desire,

and so the continual increase of the longings which cannot be gratified. I might put it in a somewhat rough form which comes to my mind, because it was quoted to me the other day as an illustration of the way in which, with the narrowness of thought, this idea of more and more of the same thing comes out increasingly. You remember the story of the rustic who was asked what would make him completely happy, and he said: "To sit upon a gate and swing, and chew fat bacon all day." Then he was asked: "Suppose you could have something more to make you happy, what would you ask for?" And he said: "More swinging on a gate, and more fat bacon." Now, that is a rough way of putting it; but it is essentially the answer the majority of people make. They may have a higher desire, I grant, than sitting on a gate and eating fat bacon; but the principle of their desire is the same as the principle of the rustic—that they want more of these things that they already possess, and that they do not realise that happiness does not lie in this increasing gratification of desires, but in the transmuting of the desire for the transitory into the aspiration to the Eternal, and the complete changing of the nature from that which seeks to enjoy to that which seeks to give. And if this be true, then in your search for happiness you had better consider on what



line you are travelling ; for if you be travelling along the line of the gratification of desire, then no matter how much you refine it, you are travelling along a road that is practically an endless circle, and that will always leave you unsatisfied and never give you the bliss which is the natural goal of the Spirit in man.

And thus after a while, by this absence of satisfaction, which is pain, the realisation comes to the Soul that this is not the road, and he grows weary of change. All these outer objects of body and of mind lose their attractive force ; weary of the change which he finds everywhere in the lower world, he no longer goes outward but he turns his face inward and upward. He went outward to the senses and failed ; then he drew into the mind, but the mind is outward from the standpoint of the Spirit, and again he failed ; always beaten back by pain, always beaten back by the dissatisfaction that is the most wearisome pain of all. And then, finally, he learns his lesson, and he turns away from that which is without ; he turns within ; and then he finds the beginning of peace, the first touch of real, of essential satisfaction. \*

And another use of pain, a more inner lesson now : for we have reached the point where the Soul has distinguished himself from the body of desire and even from the mind itself. And still

he has not got<sup>1</sup> outside the reach of pain, for he has not yet quite found his centre, he is only seeking it still; and although he knows that he is not the body, nor the senses, nor the mind, he still finds himself susceptible of pain that comes from within, of contacts that translate themselves as pain. And coming into contact with others—with the thoughts and the feelings and the judgment of others—he constantly finds himself pained by misjudgments and mistranslations, by unkind thoughts and unkind feelings; and if the Soul has by this time gained wisdom, as he must have done if he has followed the path along which we have been tracing him, then he will begin to ask himself: Why do I still feel pain? What is there, not in the outside, <sup>2</sup>but *in me* that gives rise to pain? For he has now passed beyond the ignorance which makes this outer thing appear as the inflicter of pain, and he relates to himself the element that causes pain, and realises that nothing can touch him save himself, which is in truth responsible for all. And if he feels pain the cause of pain must lie in himself, and not, after all, in the external object; for if the Soul were perfect, nothing that is outside could again to give him pain; and if he feel pain, it is a sign of imperfection, that he is not withdrawn wholly from the lower nature which is not himself. And then he begins to use pain instead of merely feeling it;

and there is a distinction between the two. He is no longer at the mercy of pain, but he takes pain into his own hands as an instrument and uses it for his own purpose; when he finds this pain—we will say which comes from unkind action, or from misjudgment of motive or of conduct—the Soul takes the pain in hand as a sculptor might take a chisel, and with this instrument of pain he strikes at his own personality, for he knows that if it were not for this personality which is selfish, he would not feel the pain at all, and that he may use the pain as a chisel to cut off this personal weakness, and so remain serene and untroubled amid the conflicts of the world.

For thus has it been with all those who have risen above personality, those great and liberated Souls whom we speak of as Masters, and who always work for the world, no matter how the world misjudges Them. It was said by one of Them: "We feel the slanders and the criticisms of mankind just as much as the heights of the Himālayas feel the hissing of the serpents that glide around their feet." There is *there* no personality which can be hurt by misjudgment, no personality which can suffer by misconstruction. They bestow a blessing, and the man who receives it knows not whence it comes; in his ignorance he jeers or scoffs, or accuses the Masters unknowing

what They are, and translating Them into himself as though he were They. Are They hurt? No; to the misconception They answer with pity, to the insult They answer with forgiveness, for in Them there is nothing that can be hurt by misconception; only They can feel pity for the sake of the one who is blinded and who cannot see—pity for the blinded brother who by his wrong thought is injuring his own Soul. The moon is not injured by anyone who would throw mud against it; the mud falls back on the one who throws it and soils his garments; the light of the moon remains pure and untouched by the mud of earth. And so, as the Soul is thus growing onwards to the light, he uses pain as an instrument to destroy personality and these subtle things of the personality that even the strong Soul may be blind to; he takes the pain as the most merciful of messages to tell him of his own weakness, of his own fault, and of his own mistake. For as you grow in knowledge you realise that your worst enemy is not the outside fault that you recognise, but the inner blindness that does not see the place of danger, and does not know that it does not see. When you fall, and know you fall, then the danger is but a small one; it is when you fall and know not that you have fallen, that the enemies of the Soul rejoice. And

if there comes pain from the falling then the pain is welcome; for that tells of the danger and may open our eyes to the slip that has been made. In that way pain, as I said, is no longer an infliction; it is welcome as a warning and as an instrument that the Soul may use; it is now the surgeon's knife that cuts away the spot of danger; no longer to be resisted as an enemy but to be welcomed as a friend.

And still pain has another use, now a matter of choice by the free Soul, the Soul that means to be strong, not for himself but for the helping of the world, the Soul that realises that he has to live for others, and knows that he can only learn to live for others if he is strong in himself; then he will choose pain because only thus can he learn endurance: he will choose pain because only thus can he learn patience. Those who never suffer must always remain weak, and only in the stress and the agony of the combat will the Soul learn to endure, though the combat, remember, is still a sign of weakness. Were we strong we should not need to fight; but we can only gain the strength that shall not need to struggle in the agony of the struggle, for then gradually the strength will work itself into the Soul, and that which once was anxiety and struggle will gain the calm serenity of perfect strength. . .

And for one other thing the Soul will choose pain—that it may learn sympathy. For even the strong Soul would be useless if he had not learned sympathy. Nay, the strong Soul might be rather dangerous than anything else if he had become strong without compassion, and had learned to gather force while he had not learned to guide that force aright. For force that is only strong and not compassionate may trample instead of raising, and of all things *that* would break, as it were, the heart of the Soul that would fain rise. Strength, not having that touch of sympathy which is keener than all sight and is the very intuition of the Spirit, might be used for mischief and not for helping; he might injure where he desired to help, and might crush where he desired to lift. And so the stronger it is, the more eagerly will the Soul seek this lesson of pain, in order that by feeling he may learn to feel, and that by his own pain he may learn how the pains of the world shall be healed; for otherwise we may not learn. Not from without but from within we have to be builded, and all the pains that we have in our imperfections are, as it were, the stones with which the temple of the perfect Spirit is finally built. Pain in the end there will not be; but pain in the building there must be; therefore the Disciple chooses the Path

of Woe, because only by woe! may he learn compassion, and only as he thrills to every touch from the outer universe will he, who is to be the heart of the universe, be able to send out responsive thrills of healing, which shall pass through all manifested life and carry with them the message of helpfulness and of strength.

Thus then for the uses of pain, though you might find many another. And though I have only taken out a few obvious and simple enough examples, yet they may be helpful in the telling. But is that the end? Is that the final fate of the Soul? Is pain to be anything more than a use? Is pain the natural atmosphere of the Spirit? They err who believe that sorrow is the end of things; they err who believe that pain and sadness are really the atmosphere in which the Spirit lives. The Spirit is bliss, it is not sorrow; the Spirit is joy, it is not pain; the Spirit is peace, it is not struggle; the essence and the heart of all things is love, is joy, is peace; and the path of pain is the path and not the goal, the Path of Woe is only the means and not the end. For out of that Ocean of Blessedness whence the universe has sprung, spring love and peace and joy unceasing, and those are the heritage of the Spirit out of manifestation. Pain lies in the sheaths in which he is clothed, and not in his essential nature.

Never forget that in the struggle of life! Never

let the pain blind your eyes to the joy, nor let the passing anxieties make you unconscious of the bliss which is the core and heart of Being. Pain is passing, bliss is eternal; for bliss is the inner essence of Brahman, the Self of all. Therefore as the Spirit goes onward, therefore as the Spirit grows freer, peace takes the place of struggle, and joy takes the place of pain. Look on the highest face: there is indeed the mark of pain, but of pain that is over and that has been changed into strength and sympathy and compassion, and a deep unending joy. For the final word of the universe is Bliss; the final outcome of Humanity is rest, conscious rest in happiness. And all the messages of pain are in order that the Spirit may gain his liberation; the end is the end of peace, and the manifested side of peace is joy.

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